

THE
DUPED GUARDIAN:

OR, THE

AMANT MALADE.

VOL. I.



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AMANT MALADE.

A N O V E L.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY MRS. CARTWRIGHT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N,
Printed for W. Cass, Lamb's Conduit-Street, Holborn.

M DCC LXXXV.

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OF THE

AMANT MAI



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M D C LXXXV

THE
DUPED GUARDIAN.

LETTER I.

MISS PELHAM to LADY LAURA

ANTRIM.

Broom Hill.

BY this time even my dearest *Laura* is, I doubt, inclined to censure the mysterious conduct of her friend, and though she may not entirely join the overbearing tide of calumniators, yet is

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B

her

her opinion on the totter, just hovering on the verge of uncertainty, and giddy with futile conjectures, ready to embrace whatever appears like confirmation; for to believe the worst is sometimes little more afflictive than the tortures of suspense. Silence, stubborn silence, where the heart has been accustomed freely to disburthen its secrets, most assuredly carries with it an appearance of guilt, and till the veil of mystery is withdrawn, even partial-minded friendship must be at a stand, and fear to pronounce its opinion; but when circumstances change, truth brightens the lowring scene, and innocence shining forth in its native splendour preponderates over calumny; then does the tear of regret atone for the temporary suspension, and the supposed culprit clings faster to the heart than ever.

This

This let me but prove, and freely will I forgive my enemies; for the esteem of one deserving friend is more to be desired than the unmeaning professions of a herd of sycophants, whose heart and lips are continually at variance. Before I had the happiness of Lady *Laura Antrim's* acquaintance, I knew not that nice distinction, but felt myself pleased with all whom I appeared to please. Friendship, or rather its false shadow, poured in on every side, and my perfections were so enhanced, that I absolutely began to think myself devoid of error; but I soon saw the same scene of idolatry practised to many who had not the smallest pretensions to merit, further than what their rank extorted, and began to perceive, that my own credulity had deceived me. The discovery was of infinite utility, for from that

hour the breath of flattery became obnoxious to me, and till I could find a friend sincere enough to despise it also, I determined to form no particular intimacy with my own sex, or encourage the attentions of the other.

It was the best resolution I ever formed, as it induced me to stay more at home, and by rendering me cautious in the selection of my parties abroad, in time reduced the large circle of my acquaintance to a few respectable characters, among the foremost of which I deservedly rank my *Laura*. But my neglect of her, at a period when my conduct seemed to require the most explicit explanation, has been such an apparent deviation from the rules of sincerity, that friendship blended with candour, and that amiable disposition
which

which prompts even the forgiveness of an injury, is the only basis on which form my hopes of retaining her esteem.

But while engaged in this prefatory discourse, I forget that her curiosity is on the rack to know what corner of the habitable world contains her *Harriot*; and, still more, what powerful reasons could prevail on her to become a fugitive, an alien to her friends and family.

You see, my dear, I have still the vanity to believe you are not uninterested in these particulars, though appearances are so much against me; and by the next post will prepare myself to clear up those painful doubts, from which even all your friendship for me, I am sensible, cannot possibly exempt you; but at this time must content my-

self with assuring you, that I am in being, and allowing for the fatigue I have sustained these ten days past, both in body and mind, am in better health and spirits than might be reasonably expected, under such an extraordinary change of circumstances.

I have taken up my residence at a credible farm-house, from whence I date this, and am now sitting in a spacious oak bed-room; the bow windows of which are covered with jessamine, the passion flower, and honey suckles, blended in beautiful confusion, which, enlivened by a serene shower, are now blooming to my view, and shedding abundantly their reviving sweets on the happy humble inhabitants of the peaceful vale. I say happy, my dear, from the firm belief that the unlettered humble

Ble kind (though not conspicuously so from Fortune's glittering gifts) possesses a greater blessing in a contented heart, than all the wealth of *India* could bestow. Adieu, my amiable friend, excuse this trespass on your patience; the prolixity of my next shall amply atone for the shortness of this; but the why's and wherefore's are now too long to enter on, as the man who conveys our letters to the next post town is waiting to add this to his packet, and can stay no longer than while I subscribe myself,

With unremitting friendship,

your's,

HARRIOT PELHAM.

L E T T E R II.

MISS PELHAM to LADY LAURA

ANTRIM.

I AM now fat down to acquaint my *Laura* of the cogent reasons which urged me to this mysterious flight; various I doubt not are the conjectures it has given birth to, and various ones will yet arise (unless, tired of the subject the public chuse a new one); for I am determined never to attempt a vindication of my own conduct at the expence of my sister's happiness. She will lament the loss of me, but how much more would her distress be augmented,

mented, were she acquainted with the motives. No; never will I wound her tender bosom; to you alone, my amiable friend, will I communicate the secret tale, because convinced that my confidence will not be misplaced, and that you will kindly endeavor to extract the barbed arrow which rankles my reputation, without turning the point towards her worthy heart. You start at the mention of my sister, and are still more bewildered in the intricate maze of wild conjecture; but idea cannot attain the source of this hidden mystery. I will, therefore, no longer keep you in suspense, my friend, though painful is the task to elucidate self-merit by the depreciation of those characters we have been accustomed to respect; but proceed to inform you that the criminal passion of my brother-in law has constrained me to abjure his friendship

and protection, compelled me to become an exile from my family, and to exchange the magnificent abode, to which I have ever been accustomed, for the clay-built cottage. I see the virtuous indignation rising in your expressive countenance at a discovery so foreign to any thing you could surmise; but it is a truth that will admit of no disguise, and, greatly as it must wound your sensibility, I cannot conceal it from you, for nothing less than such a discovery could vindicate the step which I have taken.

You are not to be informed, my friend, that I am some years younger than my sister, the circumstance of her having been ten years married sufficiently prove it; but I should deem any one an absurd flatterer, who presumed to persuade me that I am indebted to nature for any

one

one advantage over her either in mind or person. On the contrary, I think she grows every day more attractive; and the amiability of her disposition, was even her beauty on the wane, would hardly permit us to notice the decline; in a word, so lovely does she appear to my partial eyes, that, was I desirous of a portraiture of human perfection, *Caroline* should fit for it: but you know her; it is, therefore, needless to enumerate her charms or virtues.

I was about eight years old, when *Mr. Hoyle* first paid his addresses to her; and, as his fortune was unobjectionable, and her heart seemed interested in his consent, the most indulgent of parents did not long withhold it, and, blinded by his specious appearance, thought he resigned her to an angel. No wonder

the eyes of a weak old man were dazzled with the false colourings of virtue; when all the world are equally deceived; for so artfully does he conduct himself, that few even now doubt but he is that paragon of excellence, of which he in reality is but the semblance.

Soon after my sister's marriage, we lost this best of fathers (our mother had been dead many years); and with these favourable prepossessions, it is natural to think he could not in his own idea appoint me a more worthy guardian than her husband. I was of the same opinion, and chearfully complied with *Caroline's* request of making her house my home; my education was compleated under her inspection, and, when of an age to become mistress of my own actions, the most uncontrouled indulgence was allowed

allowed me; yet were not her maternal cares the least diminished, but to the tender monitress she united the agreeable companion, and, while bestowing the attentions of the most affectionate mother, forgot not that we were sisters, and as such presumed not on her superiority of years to exert any disagreeable authority over me, but contented herself with merely pointing out to me those paths of virtue and discretion which she so invariably pursued.

If there was any difference in our dispositions, it most conspicuously displayed itself in the gaiety and native cheerfulness of my temper, which led me into a larger circle of acquaintance than was consistent with her retired domestic plan; but though she joined not in them, she offered no arguments to dissuade

dissuade me from the participation of those amusements adapted to my age and quality; probably she foresaw that satiety would sooner effect a change, and anticipated the day in which my better reason would constrain me to acknowledge, that happiness consisted not in a continual whirl of pleasure.

It happened as she wished: the gross flattery of the male sex, and pretended friendship of my own, soon, very soon, disgusted me; the scene of my amusements became more circumscribed, and consequently more happy: in a word, I had just begun to enjoy rational felicity in the society of this best of sisters and my dearest *Laura*, when an accident discovered to me, that I had every thing to dread from the criminal partiality of *Mr. Hoyle*.

I was

I was one day sitting *solus* in the music-room, practising a new air, which this supposed amiable brother-in-law had been assiduous in teaching me, when my eyes were suddenly detached from the harpsichord, by a piece of folded paper in the form of a letter under one of the *cabrioles*: thinking I might have dropt it myself, I instantly arose and picked it up; but, instead of any literary bagatelle of my own, I found it to be a letter superscribed *Edmund Hoyle, Esq;* in female characters: that curiosity, so generally spoke of as the bane of our sex (fortunate curiosity for your *Harriot*), for once operated most powerfully in my heart, which probably was much augmented by my fears for poor *Caroline*; for what correspondence could he possibly have with our sex, if all was as it should be?

I held

I held the letter some minutes in my hand, hesitating what to do; one moment determined not to give way to my curiosity, lest it should be repaid by discovering what would make me wretched on her account; the next, overcome by the ungovernable impulse; but, before I attempted its gratification, imposed on myself a solemn vow, whatever it contained destructive to her happiness, never to wound her heart by making her a participater of the secret; for, next to being faithfully beloved, my reason whispered me, it was the greatest satisfaction for a wife to believe so, and hitherto nothing had transpired to persuade her of the contrary.

I then yielded to the impulse; and the first sentence which I read nearly deprived me of sensation. Judge, my
dearest

dearest *Laura*, what I must have suffered to find by the underwritten scrawl, that not only my fears for *Caroline* were realized, but my own virtue in imminent danger, if I did not immediately fly from the snares which were prepared for me.

DERE HOYLE;

"I HAVE prepard evry think for the resepshon of *Mis Pelam* as yew desired; whenere yew can contrive to brake down on the *Hampton* rode—I shall be redy to act Ladi Bownteful to a marscal, and by the help of my cordals, hope not only to releve her frite; but so charmingli to compose her flatterd spirets that yew will hav nothink to fere from her resistance—But remember in reterne for this complience I expext you will as you promesed me

gro

gro tierd of her in a mounth, and then
 be mine as mutch as ever—If I did
 not think I mite depend on this I would
 come and expos all to yewr wife who
 I no thiaks yew an angel. I hope yew
 have got sum frende to take her quite
 off yewr hands wen yew have don with
 her, for she musent stay in *England*, or
 to force her into a monastrey woud be
 the best skeem as then her fortien woud
 be yewr own and yew woud be able
 to give a thousan or two more to my
 boy—He grows, as hanfum and as im-
 pudent as his father, but I fere will
 never have hafe that saanktity of face
 which so charmingli imposes on the
 world—And while every ons enemy at
 hart, makes them love ye wether they
 will or not—I see yewr preti *Harriet*
 last weke in the faton with *Mrs. Hoyle*
Sukey was with me at the winder wen
 they

they went by, and she sed it was a shame yew shoud think of engrossing too such swete wimen to yewrself—She did look swetely innocent to be shure, but no matter a bargins a bargins yew no—There is to be no engrossing in the case, for at most yew arr not to keep her abuve a mounth. Let me no a day or too before yew intend to bring her that I may praices a little for I havene been in maskerade since Mother Stevens so successfulli passed me on yew for an innocent country damsel from York—If the bate takes as well as that did we may soone sing triumphe and theres little fere of it, for the face that end impose on one who noes the world as well as yew cant fail to impose on such a pretti innocent as yewr sister—Farewel yew ante to believe I love yew when I stoop to turn *Catover* for yew, but I have

have besides a secret satisfaction in bringing others to the same level as myself—Good buy no more at present from yrs

JANE ELWOOD."

I had but just time to conceal this execrable epistle (after the perusal of which I had indulged myself in a copious shower of tears) before *Mrs. Hoyle* came into the room, and, with the drops still glistening in my eyes, began to touch the keys, that she might not notice my distress; but the disguise was too flimsy, and could not escape her observation. She easily saw I had been weeping, and with tender solicitude enquired the cause. Reserve was so foreign to my nature, that she must have suspected some fatal secret, had I evaded her question, without some plausible excuse for the situation in which she found me;

me; but fortunately one occurred without torturing my invention; for my painful sensations at this horrid discovery were otherwise too predominant to have permitted the exertion of it.

The *Orphan of China* lay by me on the harpichord. I wiped off the falling tears and pointed to the book.

My amiable deceived sister understood me as I meant, and preserved me from a further breach of truth.

"What, you have been weeping over the distresses of poor *Mandane*? I admire your sensibility; but, my dear *Harriot*, you should moderate your sympathy. If we suffer fictitious misery to overpower our hearts, it blunts our feelings to the real ills of life, and few are
there

there in the world without some share, though, thanks to indulgent Heaven, you and I, my love, have hitherto been exempt from them. A tender parent who left no reasonable wishes ungratified, and a husband kindly attentive to my happiness, and who (now it has been pleased to deprive us of the former) supplies to you that tender tie, and by the most indulgent conduct constrains us both to forget that our felicity ever was allayed, are blessings for which we cannot be sufficiently grateful; but yet, added she, "the ways of Heaven are dark and intricate: we may yet have sufficient subjects whereon to exercise our fortitude." Do not therefore exhaust your stock of sensibility before its time: let us be happy now, because we have nothing to make us otherwise, and trust the future to that providence hitherto

so partial to us; for my part, I am in unusual spirits. This is the birth-day of my *Henry*, I believe he has forgot it, but I am determined, on his return from *Kensington*, to surprise him with the congratulations and presence of the friends most valuable to him. I have sent cards also to several of your favorites; *Lady Laura*, *Miss Lascelles*, the engaging *Edwin*, and another or two, whom I know you would not wish to be absent on this agreeable occasion, and came on purpose to consult you on the important article of dress; for I intend being more than usually splendid to-day. You have infinite taste, and must decide for me. I have been this half hour fluctuating in my opinion, and know not to which to give the preference, my white and silver or my painted poleneze. Come, awaken from this luxury of tears,

and

and accompany me to my dressing-room."

Had I before been ever so determined to unburthen my heart of its ponderous secret, it would then have been impossible to have put my design in execution, for to have disturbed her serenity amid such a dream of imaginary happiness, on which she expatiated with such heartfelt satisfaction, would have argued a disposition more cruel than the butcher, who, while the bounding lamb is skipping playfully about him, licking the shining blade destined for its destruction, raises his slaughter-loving arm, and plunges it in the throat of the bleating victim. My over-charged heart was too oppressed with grief to answer her in the same lively strain; but, endeavouring as much as possible to conceal

its painful sensations, I for once invoked the aid of hypocrisy, and followed her to her toilet: the business of which being over, so confused were my ideas, that I should have immediately went down stairs, without considering that I was unfit to see our guests, till my own person had underwent a similar arrangement, had not *Caroline* reminded me that it was time to dress.

But never did I find myself so ill-disposed towards the adornment of my person; instead of the usual desire of rendering it more attractive, I could not refrain from wishing it had been naturally far less so, and could no longer find satisfaction in contemplating those charms which had given birth to an unlawful passion. The desire of conquest, so peculiar with some of our sex, never

operated so forcibly on my mind as it does on many. The admiration of the worthy cannot fail of producing a source of pleasure in the most virtuous heart, and, I will own, is not indifferent to me; but that of those unmeaning coxcombs, who flutter around youth and beauty, without any real susceptibility of its worth, never inspired me with the least delight: to have found myself the object of a dishonorable attachment would have been very mortifying to reflect on, though it had been a character of known libertinism, but doubly so to discover that the man, in whose hands my honor was invested, the man, who above all others my father deemed most worthy of such a trust, should have formed the most cruel designs against my virtue; to think also that he was the husband of my sister, an amiable woman, who,
deceived

deceived by his plausibility of conduct, loved him to excess, and, so far from suspecting his infidelity, believed his heart invariably attached to her ; indeed, my *Laura*, they were reflections almost too powerful for my reason, and more painfully afflicted me, from the impossibility of warding the impending danger but by flight, or a discovery of his hypocrisy, which I knew must inevitably destroy her peace, and even to have given it the slightest wound would have more sensibly affected me than any difficulties to which silence might subject me.

This discovery of his villany had opened my eyes to many little familiarities, which, in any other person, must have long before awakened my suspicions, and alarmed my delicacy ; but, accustomed as I had been to them from

an infant, was it probable the caresses of a brother should be deemed an impropriety? No; in all the security of unsuspecting innocence, I flew to meet them; and frequently, when *Caroline* has checked him for treating me so much like a child, have secretly wished never to be a woman, if I must yield the satisfaction of those endearments which ever accompanied his approbation of my conduct. Little did I think, while indulging those little effusions of tenderness, that I was fanning an unwarrantable flame. Fifteen is not the age for reflection: I had always regarded *Mr. Hoyle* in a paternal light, and till this fatal discovery of his unworthiness never ceased to think of him with filial affection. His behaviour to all the ladies, who visited my sister, was such as could hardly entitle him to the appellation of a
man

man of gallantry, much less an unprincipled libertine; and, had my heart suggested to me a wish of being particularly distinguished by any of his sex, my ideas would have rested on just such another character.

It is easy then to imagine how great must have been my disappointment to find him such as he really is. During the time that I was dressing, a thousand distressing thoughts agitated my throbbing heart; there was still more than two years remaining to my being of age, and till that time all that I could command, independent of *Mr. Hoyle*, was fifty pounds a year (a little annuity left me by my grandmother), which I was conscious would barely afford me a subsistence out of his family, till I was impowered to receive my fortune, or

the yearly interest of it; for the will of my father had expressed, that on condition I died unmarried, or had no children by marriage to inherit it, the principal after my decease should become the property of my brother-in-law, to be disposed of as he saw fit. All my dependance for the present was, therefore, on this little bequest; and in what manner I could employ it, so as to procure me a support, I was entirely at a loss; one minute I determined to consult my *Laura*; the next I discouraged the idea, from the firm belief that her friendship would oppose my flight, and with the kind intention of insuring the safety of her *Harriot*, probably in the height of its enthusiasm take some unguarded step that might contribute to the unhappiness of my sister. Thus torn by contending thoughts, and fluctuating in
my

my resolves, I huddled on my cloaths (refusing the aid of *Sally*, who appeared astonished at my caprice), and, endeavouring as much as possible to assume a composure that was foreign to my heart, made my appearance in the drawing-room just as the deceptious object of my painful cogitations alighted at the gate.

The poor deluded *Caroline*, as usual, after a few hours absence, flew to meet her deceptious husband with pleasure and conjugal affection beaming in her eyes, and, after congratulating him on the return of a day on which of all others she ever found herself inclinable to rejoice, accompanied him triumphantly to her guests, anticipating with delight the agreeable surprize she had prepared for him in their united congratulations.

To have beheld the satisfaction he appeared to find in her attention, and the easy unembarrassed air with which he returned the compliments of his friends, who would have suspected the black treachery that lurked within his breast,

“Without all goodness, and all guilt within!”

I sat some minutes in silent contemplation of those deceptive features which so artfully impose on the world, and, buried in my ideas, was the last to pay my congratulations, which, when I did, were conveyed in such a confused awkward manner, that must have rendered the sincerity of them very questionable, had not my sister excused my deficiency of spirits by telling him I had been weeping over fictitious misery till I had deadened my heart to real joy.

“What

"What has been the subject which has taken such powerful effect upon your sensibility, my dear *Harriot*?" said my traiterous brother, taking my hand, with looks expressive of the most tender solicitude; "it is a pity to deaden the lustre of those brilliant eyes by weeping over imaginary distresses. We must not indulge you in the perusal of such affecting authors, if they so strongly impress your mind. I ever find such a pleasure in beholding you chearful, that I am sure you will have the complaisance to banish all gloomy reflections for the present; it is the wish of your sister that this should be a day of joy. You must, therefore, brighten up your features, for melancholy you know is almost as infectious as yawning: besides, it will give room for our friends to suggest they are not welcome, if she who used

to be the enlivener of our parties does not afford her smiles in concert with the rest."

I made some slight reply, and withdrawing my hand in a manner that must evince some secret dissatisfaction, though the cause might be unsuspected, turned immediately to *Miss Lascelles*, and began chatting on indifferent subjects. Chagrin was visible on his countenance; but conscious guilt most probably forbade any attempt towards an explanation; and he soon after retired to change his cloaths,

All this day I experienced the most distressing emotion; a novice in dissimulation, I knew not how to conceal the agitation of my mind; and the enquiries which my gravity occasioned rendered

me quite impetuous; I could have waged war with a shadow; and even the friendly anxiety of my dearest *Laura*, in the state of mind in which I then found myself, became quite burthensome.

Happy was I when night restored me to solitude and my own reflections: yet could not my heart fail of reproaching me with ingratitude, when I recollected your parting words.

“*Harriot*, my dear *Harriot*, all is not right within; you are a miser of your griefs; the confidence of your *Laura* is suspected; and she, who was once the faithful repository of your joys, is now deemed unworthy to be a partaker of your sorrows; for sorrows I am sure you have, though you will not, by communicating them candidly, permit the lenient hand of friendship to attempt an alleviation.”

'Tis the recollection of those tender words that have helped to speak peace to my troubled soul ; for so short a space I am convinced cannot have banished the generous wish of soothing my unhappiness when once the veil of mystery is withdrawn.

Some hopeless love I doubt not was the surmise ; and I was determined, from motives of consideration to my sister, that you should remain under that mistake till I had found a place of refuge from whence I could acquaint you of my safety, and the snares from which I had escaped.

After a sleepless night, during which a thousand plans were formed, and as quickly rejected, I fixed upon that of becoming a boarder in some pleasant village at a distance from the metropolis, as one that would best suit the present
straightened

straightened state of my income, and render the place of my retreat less liable to be discovered. In order to procure such a situation without engaging the confidence of any one, I instantly carried an advertisement to be inserted in the papers, mentioning the counties I should prefer, and terms on which I wished to be received into any creditable family whom such an offer might happen to suit; and in the course of a few posts had a variety of answers, but none that pleased me so much as one from the honest inhabitants of *Broom Hill*. In a second letter we agreed upon all pecuniary matters, and (happy in having found a spot which, from the worthy people's description, appeared to be quite the situation, I should have liked, had my researches for one been personal), I immediately set about some secret preparations for my departure.

The

The little annuity I proposed living upon till I came of age had been left me for the sole purpose of pocket money, and the power of receiving it quarterly invested in myself, so that there would be no difficulty on that head, as I was sensible I might always receive it by any hand I thought proper to employ; and, as you know I am a bit of an œconomist, I was not without some little supply of money for present expences.

I passed some days in making such addition to my wardrobe as would enable me to make an appearance more proper for the retired scene of life on which I was about to enter; for it was ever my opinion, that to be happy we must conform in some degree to the manners and ideas of those we live with, and novelty alone would have been sufficient to have
reconciled

reconciled me to the thought of figuring *en villageois*, had not propriety prompted such a scheme; but to retire from, not to excite observation, was now my plan, my dress, therefore, could not be too simple. In one of my morning walks, I took a ready furnished lodging for a few days, as if for a lady out of the country, and ordered all my new purchases to be sent there, to which as secretly as I could I conveyed the remainder of my wardrobe, and all those little valuables I meant to take with me.

As I had been accustomed to go out frequently by myself, no notice was taken of my frequent excursions during these preparations, and I had compleated everything to my satisfaction without exciting the least suspicion of my intentions. But though all was in readiness, I found
my

my heart very reluctant to the further execution of my scheme: was it possible to leave a sister so tenderly beloved, one who had ever shewed for me more than parental affection (and whose happiness had ever been interwoven with mine), and not sink under the painful thought! Yet the felicity of that amiable sister, my own safety, and every virtuous motive, prompted me to sacrifice the satisfaction I enjoyed in her affection and society by a precipitate flight; for no other mode of security occurred to my imagination but such as must inevitably destroy her peace, which next to the preservation of my virtue was my dearest consideration.

The conflict of my bosom I make no doubt displayed itself on my countenance for a few days preceding my departure: the

He observed with much concern that my cheeks had lost their bloom, and, attributing the langour of my looks to too intense an application to my work or reading, begged I would read less, and be oftener in the air.

“The advice is very salutary, *Harriot*,” said *Mr. Hoyle* (who then happened to be by); “an airing two or three times a week would be of essential service to your health: I shall drive my new ponies a few miles out of town to-morrow, and will take you with me. *Mrs. Hoyle* I know will not trust herself with me till I have made a few trials of them; but you are not so timid.”

“But indeed, Sir, you must excuse me,” said I; for the idea of *Lady Bountiful* then came across my mind. “I grow quite

quite a coward, and would not for the world venture without my sister."

"Then I'll alter my plan, my dear: the sure-footed bays you can have no objection to; and I can try the ponies another day."

I was now in a pretty predicament, and had no other method of excusing myself but by feigning illness in the morning. But I was determined to subject myself to no more difficulties of the same nature; for as it would be impossible to avoid his snares by a repetition of such evasions, without giving some alarm to *Caroline*, prudence whispered me it would be best immediately to decamp.

My principal uneasiness was not so much for the change of scene I should experience,

experience, and a separation from my dearest friends, as the reflections to which my flight would subject me; for though I hoped it would be but for a time, and I should always have the power of clearing up my conduct, yet the temporary loss of their esteem was a reflection that sat more heavy on my heart than the loss of their society, and all the happiness I should leave behind me.

Previous to my departure, I wrote a few lines to my sister; informing her, that an insurmountable inclination for retirement, added to another motive equally powerful, had induced me to seek a retreat far from the bustle of the gay metropolis, and there I meant to continue for some months at least. I begged she would take no pains to discover me, as it would be a fruitless search, and, should

it

it not prove so, no persuasions would be powerful enough to alter my determination. The time might come when I should be more explicit, but till then conjured her to judge of my conduct with her wonted candor, assuring her, that, however strongly appearances might be against me, I had still the same pretensions to her esteem as ever, and hoped never to render myself unworthy of it; but this was all the apology I was then permitted to make her.

This farewell epistle I put into one of her dressing-boxes, which I knew there was no probability of her looking into till I was too far on my journey to be overtaken; and afterwards inclosed the vile *Elwood's* letter in a sheet of paper, in which I wrote three lines to *Mr. Hayle*, intimating that no other explanation

nation of my conduct was necessary than what that contained; and flit it into his portfolio, which opportunely lay open as I passed his study (meditating on the means of conveying it safe into his hands), and, when I had done, put the whole into the secretary, and locking it, put the key in my pocket, that from a fruitless search it might not at least be opened till after my departure; and this over, I went down to supper with as much composure as I could possibly assume.

Caroline was unusually grave almost unto tears: one would have imagined some secret forboding of the future hovered round her mind, for during the whole evening scarcely a smile illumined her lovely face; while, on the contrary, her faithless *Henry* was all gaiety and spirits,

spirits, probably the undoubted success of his infernal scheme helped to enliven them, for he never appeared more animated, or (to those who were not, like your *Harriot*, acquainted with the baseness of his heart) could he have possibly appeared more agreeably entertaining.

The gravity of my sister gave birth to numerous little attentions; and the insidious traitor so well supported the character of a tender husband, that, had I not known him to be in masquerade, I should have been tempted to have envied their conjugal felicity, or have breathed a wish that such an attentive help-mate might one day be my lot; but, conscious that on his side it was all a farce, I could not help despising him the more for his hypocrisy, while I
pitied

pitied the amiable dupe, whose credulity he so well imposed upon. Dear worthy woman, whispered my heart, if the numerous virtues and engaging qualities you possess cannot secure the heart of your faithless rover, may you ever continue to be thus deceived ! nor the fatal secret of his ingratitude and infidelity ever reach your ears ! Moved by such ideas, the depression of my heart communicated itself to my eyes, and a struggling tear fell upon my hand.

It was not unobserved by *Hoyle* ; and he was not so much a hypocrite as to hide the emotions it occasioned.

“ In the name of goodness, *Harriot*, what is the matter ? This melancholy of your sister’s is infectious ; my dearest girl, are you not well ? ” And he caught my
my

my hand still wet with the falling tears, and (had he dared) looked as if he wished to dry it with his lips.

I withdrew it peevishly, and complained of a pain in my head.

“ Ah ! is it not rather here ? ” said he, raising his hand to my heart.

• “ Pho ! no, it is no where ; seeing my sister affected, from her ideas of my being either unhappy or unwell, I’ll try to dissipate it by a tune on the harpsichord : will you accompany me, *Caroline* ? ”

“ My spirits are not quite in allegro, ” replied she ; “ but, however, I’ll do my best ; it is not right to encourage these vapourish fits ; to be unhappy without knowing why is sufficient to draw upon

us some real cause of woe; yet though conscious it is wrong, I cannot conquer the depression which hangs about me. Heaven send it may not be portentous of some impending ill!

"Dear superstitious girl," said my dissembling brother, and taking a hand of each, he placed us by the instrument. "Come, now for some lively tune, to drive away the cloud which envelops your spirits."

Whether a natural repugnance to oblige him, or brown melancholy still most powerful, prevented a compliance at that time, I hardly knew; but my fingers could produce none but the most plaintive sounds, and involuntarily led me into your favorite air, which I as instinctively transposed, my heart that instant dictat-

ing what was more adapted to my feelings.

Ah! how shall I in language weak,

My ardent friendship tell ;

Or from my faltering tongue to speak ;

The cruel word—farewel !

Farewel, but know, though thus we part,

My thoughts can never stray,

My heart, alas ! will with you be,

Though I am far away.

I immediately arose, unable to restrain the gushing tears ; and tenderly squeezing my beloved *Caroline's* hand, hastily wished them a good night, saying, that sleep I believed would be the best remedy for my head, and retired immediately to my room, where I indulged myself in a copious shower of tears ; and there endeavouring to compose me, began to undress, that, if my sister looked in as she passed to her own apartment, no signs of my uneasiness

uneasiness might be visible, for I was sensible, that, should she suppose me really indisposed, she would insist on her maid's sleeping in my room, which would have totally defeated my intended escape.

After passing a sleepless night, I arose quite unrefreshed, and almost too dispirited, to pursue my plan; but, as the hour of departure approached, I began to grow more calm, and, having previously secured myself a place in one of the stages that travels within ten miles of *Broom-Hill*, I stole out of the house before any of the family were stirring, and, taking a hack from the first stand I came to, soon found myself at the inn, and took my seat in the coach among the other passengers.

D 2

By

By the hour of breakfast in *B—Square*, I suppose I was near twenty miles out of town; but my lingering heart had not then began its journey, it still hovered about *Caroline* and my *Laura*, nor could my utmost endeavours draw it from their abode, though its absence was very obvious to my fellow-travellers, who (to do the good folks justice) were indefatigable in their attempts to amuse me; but, bore down by its gloomy ideas, my overcharged mind refused to profit by their kindness.

As in the journey of life, we dropt one by one upon the road; till your *Harriot* was left alone, and in the undisturbed possession of her melancholy thoughts, which so powerfully prevailed that they would probably have been indulged,
even

even to the subduction of my reason, had not they been interrupted by the arrival of the vehicle at its place of destination, from whence I took chaise to finish the remainder of my journey, and, in order to whirl away my depression, ordered the driver to fly on the wings of expedition.

On arriving within a few miles of the farm, I found the country such as they had described it, and on a nearer approach my expectations were more than answered; for never did landscape appear to me more beautifully romantic than this neat little building amidst the fertile valleys with which it is surrounded. Their daily expectation of seeing me had added diligence to their labours, and their endeavours to render it as agreeable as possible was conspicuous in

the general neatness that prevailed, both in the house and garden: the former, though unornamented with valuable furniture, stands unrivalled for its pleasing simplicity and convenience; and in the latter (though it boasts neither fruits nor flowers of undue growth) not a single weed dares to raise its humble head.

Here I may be happy thought I (as I walked up a double row of eglantine which leads to the cottage), if innocence and the integrity of my intentions will but prove sufficient to support me under the loss of the society most dear to me; and a sigh to the remembrance of those

“ Happy hours, all hours excelling,”

which had been passed with my *Caroline* and *Laura*, blended itself with the fragrant

grant breezes which exhaled from the various sweets around me.

The worthy people met me at the gate, and were followed by a sweet blooming girl about fourteen, whose heart seemed to bound with joy as she approached me, and when they had welcomed me (to an abode, they said, it should be their study to render as agreeable as their abilities and little knowledge of the world permitted), she advanced and threw her arms about me with a simplicity that charmed me, and shewed, what I have since discovered, that, ever since my residing among them had been agreed on, she had impatiently anticipated the hour of my arrival.

At that time I supposed her to be their daughter, but have since learnt

that she is not ; however, the little I know of my pretty *Clara's* history must be reserved for a future letter ; for this, in its prodigious length, exceeds all reasonable bounds, and, was not curiosity in some degree an incitement, must, I am sure, exceed the limits of my *Laura's* patience. But as pride is said to render some people insensible to pain, so has the desire of information sometimes the power of engaging a longer portion of attention than at others. I will therefore persuade myself, that during the perusal of this epistle she will neither fall asleep, or complain of *ennui*, and, by leaving something yet unsaid, excite a wish of hearing from me again ; but must hope first to have the only satisfaction (a satisfaction, I trust, I need not name) that can afford the smallest compensation

penfation for the lofs of what no other
fociety can atone to the heart of

Your unalterable

HARRIOT PELHAM.

P. S. Address for *Miss Chet-*
wyn, Broom-hill, D—shire.

L E T T E R III.

LADY LAURA ANTRIM to MISS
PELHAM.

Saville Row.

HARRIOT, my dearest *Harriot*, how
shall I exprefs the joy with which
I beheld your well-known characters!

D 5

I was

I was dressing for Lady *Bernard's* rout when the postman rapped, and flying from the hands of my *friseur*, instinctively flew to the stairs, (my heart anticipating with the strongest impatience some intelligence of my amiable fugitive). I could hardly wait till *Fanchon* brought up the letter, and then snatching it eagerly from her hands, I immediately perceived it to be yours: in the extravagance of my joy I kissed the senseless cover an hundred times: had the bearer been there, he would, probably, have came in for his share of thanks also; and my gratitude would have afforded as extensive a field for scandal, as the late friendly exertions of a certain beautiful duchess.

Regardless of Monsieur *Papillote*
(who stood cooling his irons, and wait-
ing

ing impatiently for my ladyship to re-seat myself that he might pursue his operations), I broke open the seal, and found, to my unspeakable satisfaction, that you was well, that your friendship for your *Laura* was still undiminished, and a promise of further explanation in your next. The latter part of the story did not altogether prove agreeable to my impatience—*Mais N'impose*—I was constrained to make a virtue of necessity, and curb the impetuous tide of curiosity, that almost overflowed the boundaries of my reason.

Now let me chide you, *Harriot*, for the cruel suggestion of my joining the calumnious throng. Think you, that the heart so sincerely attached to you, so stedfast in its opinion of your worth, could be one moment biassed by the

opinion of other people less acquainted with your virtues? No, my amiable friend, mysterious as your flight appeared, I doubted not but you had substantial reasons for your conduct, and till I knew them was resolved to suspend mine; but I own your want of confidence pained me most severely.

The moment you was missing, a card was dispatched to me : I was sitting at breakfast with my guardian.

“ *Mrs. Hoyle’s* compliments wait on *Lady Laura*; is under the greatest distress for the loss of her sister; begs to know if *Miss Pelham* has called upon her this morning; but fears, that enquiry to be a fruitless one, as she has taken all her wardrobe with her. It will be needless to describe how much she

she is affected : if her ladyship was previously acquainted with her intentions, hope, in pity to the feelings of a sister, she will not withhold an explanation."

I had hardly power to finish it, my tea-cup fell from my trembling hand, and, bursting into tears, I sobbed my grief aloud.

Lord Wormeaten, who you know is not a man of the most tender feelings, asked me surlily, " why I whimpered instead of returning an answer ; there was time enough to cry when the man was gone. Trips to *Seotland* were grown so common now, that they were not worth wondering at, or weeping about, that he knew of ; but he supposed I was offended because I had not been admitted of the party."

" Suspend

“Suspend your judgement, Sir,” said I, “till there are some grounds for the suggestion: my friend has no inducement to take such an imprudent step; she has no tyrannic guardian who delights to impede her happiness; besides, I dare affirm, that she will never make a choice which renders such a clandestine proceeding necessary; without doubt, she has her reasons for leaving her sister, though it is not at present her pleasure to make them known.”

“Oh doubtless,” replied he, with a sarcastic grin, which, much as it offended me, I had not time to notice; but, calling for my calash, bid the man order a chair, and caused myself to be immediately conveyed to *Mr. Hoyle's*.

When I arrived (as you may suppose), I found all the family in consternation,

no one having the least knowledge of your flight; and, as to poor *Caroline*, she had almost wept herself into a state of insanity.

Her grief still more augmented, on learning that I was entirely unacquainted with your intentions, as it left no hopes of discovering the road you had taken, for, if your confidence had been withheld from me, she was sure, she said, that no other person was acquainted with your secret.

Mr. Hoyle raved like one insane. "What was your inducement? Could you possibly be happier than under their protection! But some d——d fortune-hunter, he doubted not, had secretly undermined your prudence; for, if you had
made

made a worthy choice, no secrecy would have been required."

"Do not judge too rashly," interrupted I; "it is yet probable she has made no choice at all; was there never an elopement but there must be a lover in the case?"

"No; unless it was to avoid a hated match, which could not in this instance be the reason, as you had ever been perfectly mistress of your own conduct."

"And that conduct, my good friends, has, you are conscious, ever hitherto been unimpeachable; do not, therefore, alarm yourselves with conjectures of the dear girl's imprudence, till further proofs occur. A few days, I dare say, will produce an explanation, but probably your
suspence

suspence may be still shorter; it is not unlikely that *Miss Pelham* has left some apology behind her: have you searched her room?"

"Yes, every corner of it, and no letter is to be found." At that instant *Mrs. Hoyle's* maid came into the drawing-room with a folded paper in her hand, which, she said, she had seen you put the day before into one of her lady's dressing-boxes, when nobody was supposed to see you; and she had taken the liberty to bring it down, thinking it might contain some discovery of what they wished so much to know.

Your sister eagerly took it from *Patty*, and, after running it hastily over, burst into tears, and put it into the hands of *Mr. Hoyle*, exclaiming amidst her sobs that

that her forebodings of the preceding night were then very clearly accounted for.

It is impossible to describe his agitation: when he came to the part where you tell her that nothing shall prevail on you to return, it even exceeded poor *Caroline's*. He stamped, swore, and vowed never to give over the pursuit till he had discovered the place of your retreat; for, if regardless of your own reputation, it was necessary your friends should exert themselves in preserving it: who would believe the stupid tale of an attachment to the country, when you had full liberty at all times to go there without such clandestine measures! Some lover was surely at the bottom of this scheme, and a menial one, or he was much mistaken; but that should be his
immediate

immediate task to discover. After thus venting his passion, which I really believe proceeded from his friendship to you, he retired to his study in order to calm his emotions, and ponder on the means most effectual to your discovery; and, while he was gone, I employed all my eloquence in soothing the mind of your afflicted sister.

About half an hour afterwards, *Mr. Hoyle* returned to us, but seemingly in a very different humour to that in which he left us. His former rage appeared to be diminished, and he no longer maintained the resolution of pursuing you. A little reflection, he said, had convinced him it would be best to desist from such a thought, and, that the world might be less busy in inventing tales to your disgrace, it would be proper to give
out,

out, that in a frolic you had accompanied a friend abroad, and had taken a French leave merely to have the pleasure of putting them in a bustle.

Caroline, you know, is all condescending meekness, she easily fell into his plan; but that did not lessen her grief, or prevent her from breathing the most fervent wish that a tender consideration for her happiness might prompt you to send either herself, or me, a fuller explanation of the motives which urged your flight.

The strongest marks of chagrin were visible in every feature of your brother, and, even pathetically as *Mrs. Hoyle* lamented the loss of you, it would have been difficult to have determined which was most affected. My endeavours to calm their uneasiness for some time rendered

dered me insensible to my own; but, when I reached home, it returned with added force, nor could I for some days banish it by all the arguments my reason offered; and every time I went into public, it received addition by the impertinent interrogations with which I was momentarily tormented.

“Is it really true, *Lady Laura*, that your lovely friend *Miss Pelham* has made a trip to the continent without previously making her intentions known to her brother and sister? A little well-meant deception that, I fear, to cover a foible that will bear no close enquiries: well, who would have thought such a prudent young lady would have eloped at last, and with no one knows who too!”

“Nor does any one but those who are happy to believe any thing destructive
tive

tive of their neighbours fame, believe so now," replied I, and walked to another part of the room. Cannot you guess, *Harriot*, who made this speech? no other than *Miss Lascelles*, who I am persuaded rejoices secretly at an event which will give her an opportunity of playing off all her airs and graces on the agreeable *Edwin*, with a greater probability of success than when her small display of charms are eclipsed by the presence of the conquering *Miss Pelham*. By the way, this same *Edwin*, since the absence of a certain lady, sighs most piteously.

As I am daily in expectation of hearing from you again, I shall not close this letter till possessed of that happiness. It gives me pleasure to hear that you are not disagreeably situated, but the satisfaction

faction will, I own, be much enhanced, to know what induced you to make choice of such a retreat ; for indeed, *Harriot*, this self same curiosity, that is often so fatal to our sex, is very busy about the mind of your

LAURA.

IN CONTINUATION.

GOOD heavens ! what deceivers are these men ! I shall never like the sex again. Is it possible, my dearest *Harriot*, that *Hoyle* (I will not honor him with the epithet of your brother) can be such a villain ? Dear amiable girl, how much do I esteem you for your tender consideration to the happiness of your sister !

No

No wonder he raved, the lion will roar when deprived of his prey : never will I again value myself upon my penetration, for all that is amiable, all that is respectable in man, I attributed to this deceptious hypocrite. A pretty plan indeed ! what a wretch that *Elwood* ! to propose immuring you in a convent, after the perpretation of his villainy ! It is a wonder she did not propose silencing your clamours by some more effectual means. If she goes on in her vile career, she will soon become a faithful imitator of the heroine of *Titus Andronicus*, and hold it a ruling maxim, that “ dead men tell no tales ; ” what a pity such a wretch should go unpunished ! But though permitted now to pursue her iniquitous course, the vengeance of offended Providence doubtless hangs over her devoted head.

For heaven's sake, my dear friend, be cautious how you drop a word to any one respecting your real situation; there is not a doubt, but the heart which could plan such a diabolical scheme has resolution enough to pursue it, if there is a possibility of discovering your retreat, and, aided by such an accomplice as *Elwood*, his success may be more certain; for as you are not personally acquainted with this descendant of *Belzebub*, it is impossible you should be guarded against any of her manœuvres.

It grieves me to the heart to think of the pittance you propose to subsist on till you attain the possession of your fortune; that with which your benignant heart blessed multitudes, whose wants were small, is too little, far too little, to afford those indulgencies, which the

manner in which you have been brought up, and your delicate constitution, renders indispensable: permit me, dearest *Harriot*, to be your banker for the present; I have enough, nay, more than sufficient to my expences, independent of my niggardly guardian, and shall think your friendship more sincere from your compliance with my request; there can be no obligations between friends, because the bonds which attach kindred souls are ever cemented by mutual acts of kindness, and render every satisfaction imperfect that is not participated without reserve.

: yesterday called again in *B—square*. *Mrs. Hoyle* appeared more composed than when I was there last; but *Harriot* still engrosses all her thoughts: how you subsist, what sudden chimera could

could induce you to leave them thus mysteriously, are reflections that will never cease to occupy her mind, till time shall be no more, or till time shall have developed the secret.

As to the vile *Henry*, he appears to laugh at her uneasiness; though it is evident to me, he is not perfectly at ease himself, as he must have his fears, that his treachery will be discovered: he pretends to believe that a lover is in the case, and tells her, laughing, that the tender passion is substantial aliment; the clay-built cottage, a palace to an infatuated imagination; that one of these days you will appear again amongst them with an *Adonis*, whose charms will sufficiently apologize for your flight, and amply atone for every other deficiency; for the gifts of fortune ba-

lance but little in the scale of affection; and, as to his birth, should it be mean, your excuse is formed, "Love, like death, levels all distinction."

She shakes her head; hopes your native prudence has not so far deserted you; wipes away the falling tear, and begs, since the subject will not admit of any conjectures, with certainty, it may be changed for one less interesting.

How does my face vermillion with the indignation I am constrained to stifle! well-trained hypocrite! how artfully does he conceal his conscious guilt! Should I miss him from her side, I shall expire with fear, lest, in absence, he is plotting further mischief!

I will

I will now put an end to this long epistle, which, were I possessed of the secret of our modern aërial navigators, I should have no objection to being the bearer of myself; and, while you and your pretty *Clara* were amusing yourselves in the pleasing study of nature, reclined under some spreading beech or zephyr-waving poplar; I would arrest my glittering car, and, by my gradual descent in the daisy-enamelled mead, present myself before you; and for a moment suspend your admiration of the works of nature, to bestow due tribute on those of art and Messrs. *Roberts*.

You have the papers, I suppose; for every body reads the news, though an hundred miles from town, or, should they be incapable of reading them, there is always some learned man in the parish,

who can, and takes upon him the circulation of it with emendation and addition. Well, but to the point; you have doubtless heard then from the parson, esquire, or exciseman, that the above ingenious gentlemen are set out on their journey hither in a gondola of aerostatic construction; should they succeed in the attempt, I think a journey to the Lunar regions by the same means might not be impracticable, and those impenetrable mysteries, futile conjectures of which have turned the brains of so many learned men, at once be unfolded to the human eye. Nay, might they not extend their journey further, and, by peeping into those blissful abodes we are taught to aspire at, convince the Atheist and unbeliever of truths they dare to doubt. In short, the utility of this invention is too extensive to be discussed

cuffed on; but the perfection at which it is likely to arrive, must strike all soaring souls with pleasure.

Should such a mode of travelling become general, expect me transported to *Broom Hill*, in some refreshing breeze; but till a few more essays have been made, I believe it will be best to content myself on *terra firma*.

But who is this *Clara*? She is not the daughter of your hostess, it seems; who is she then? Methinks I am impatient to learn something more of her: it is natural, you know, to be curious on the subject of a rival; but let her beware of incroaching on the rights of *Laura*; remember I allow her only that place in your friendship that is necessary to be filled by personal attentions, and depute

her to the honor of substituting me by proxy so long as absence deprives me of the happiness of proving how satisfactory is your society to the heart of

LAURA ANTRIM.

LETTER IV.

MISS PELHAM TO LADY LAURA
ANTRIM.

Broom Hill.

YOUR undiminished friendship indeed, my *Laura*, I had the vanity to hope, nay even the presumption to expect; and the receipt of your sisterly epistle has proved that those hopes and expectations

expectations were not founded on an insubstantial basis. Much, my dear, am I indebted to you for your friendly proposition; nor should I decline a compliance with your well-meant request, but from reasons, which when given, I hope you will allow sufficiently convincing of the propriety of my refusal.

In a word, I have more than sufficient to my necessities; but a further explanation will be requisite, or you will think me possessed of some supernatural art. Know then, my friend, that the country I am in is remarkable for the cheapness of its provisions. I am comfortably boarded and supplied with every necessary for far less than one half of my scanty income; the remainder empowers me, in some degree, to contribute to the happiness of others, for I am at no ex-

pence on the part of external appearance, as I plentifully stocked my wardrobe before my departure from the metropolis; but among these honest industrious souls, objects of charity do not often present themselves, as all live content on the produce of their labour, unless sickness disables them for work; and to the relief of such my abilities are still adequate, for, as little purchases the necessities of life, a small sum properly bestowed answers every good intent, and enriches them without impoverishing myself. After telling you this, you will I hope believe, my *Laura*, that I do not refuse your kindness from that pride of heart which scorns to be obliged: on the contrary, you must discover, that, instead of being necessitous, I am likely to grow rich, and, should I long make my abode in these scenes of rural quiet, shall, in all

all probability, amass sufficient to leave an annual remembrance of my residence among them, to those who most deserve it by their friendship while I am here.

But, to convince you I do not disdain to be obliged, I must tell you how to confer upon me the most sensible obligation: there are many poor creatures (the list of which you will find inclosed), on whom your generosity will be nobly occupied; for to relieve those who cannot ask, is a task suited only to such minds as yours.

I sometimes used to intreat their services in their different departments, in order to afford myself an opportunity of relieving their distress, without leaving them overpowered by their obligation: to employ such, and pay them nobly, is

the most delicate relief; for there are many in the world who pine in secret, and experience all the vicissitudes of fate, without the power of making known their grief.

Such it was ever my happiness to relieve; but at this distance the power is no longer mine. I think, I have somewhere read of a man, who during life was in very straitened circumstances, and at his death had nothing to bequeath: but, when he saw his end approaching, he sent for a lawyer and made his will. The substance of which was, that he left his dearest friend (one who had ever been attached to him from his youth) the full and undivided possession of his unprotected orphans.

In like manner I bequeath you the children of my benevolence, and doubt
not.

not but you will act as this friend did. Henceforward look upon them as your own: a hint is sufficient to those who know each other. I need not lay down any rules to one who knows the just medium between profuseness and generosity; by the latter, you make yourself a source of happiness; by the former, create wants where you meant to relieve them; for to indulge any one in those enjoyments to which they have never been accustomed, totally overturns the purpose of benevolence, and adds to their wants instead of diminishing them.

This was ever a maxim with my dear sister; that sister to whom I am indebted for all the little merit I possess: dear amiable woman! what gratitude do I not owe her for that maternal care with which she endeavoured to stamp on my heart

heart every good impression, and which she still more enforced by her own example ! how do I lament a separation that inflicts such sorrow on her tender heart ! and equally so the necessity I am under of concealing what alone could exculpate me from the charge of error ! But I will not let that idea destroy the serenity of my mind ; she who even speaks of known failings with lenity, cannot surely persuade herself that the heart she has formed to virtue can have taken on it the garb of vice, unless she had more substantial proofs than that of having deserted her protecting roof : alas ! little does she suggest, that she harbours in her bosom a serpent seeking to destroy what she has nurtured with such assiduous care ; not a foible has she ever been able to descry in her deceptious *Henry* : in her eyes may he ever remain the perfect mortal.

mortal he now appears ! but much I fear the veil will one day drop, and his hypocrisy become visible to her, and to every one who has hitherto thought him infallible.

If such a discovery must be made, I should be much better satisfied that it should be effected by other means than mine ; for much as such a deceiver merits the shame of exposure, not for the world would I be instrumental to his disgrace, as the same hand which stabs his fame must inevitably wound her peace.

I should be perfectly happy in this agreeable retreat, could I have the satisfaction of knowing that her serenity was restored, for a life of retirement is quite agreeable to my taste. I can amuse my-

self

self in the rational enjoyments of the country : the whole twelve hours, without finding that time hangs heavy on my hands, I walk—ride—(for farmer *Grouchy* has always a pad at my command)—sometimes, to deversify the scene, I angle in a little stream which runs through the adjoining meadow ; but the latter is an amusement, in which I but sparingly indulge myself ; for, if successful in my baits, it ever gives me pain to see the numerous lives I have destroyed, to gratify the pleasure of shewing myself skilful in the sport ; and my heart, revolting at the cruel havock of my hands, prompts me frequently to return the fluttering captives to their native elements.

When I wish for more luxurious entertainment than the surrounding scenes afford, I retire into my favourite arbour,

at the bottom of the garden, and there, taking out my *Laura's* letter, enjoy the feast of friendship, converse with her in idea, and offer up a prayer to heaven, that fate may again restore me to the society of those most dear to me, devoid of those fears which now constrain me to abjure it.

The company of my little *Clara* too contributes greatly to enliven this retreat. No fear, however, of her rivalling you in my friendship: she is too young to engage my confidence; her simplicity would undo me; I look upon her as an amiable child, and as such bestow on her the most affectionate attentions; but such an attachment affords not the satisfactions of a friendship such as ours.

I think I mentioned in my last, that she was no relation of mine host; and have since

since been informed, by *Mrs. Grovby*, that she is niece to an old physician many miles distant from this place, who placed her with them to acquire (or rather to prevent her acquiring) the necessary accomplishments of her sex, which he declares consist principally in good housewifery, and a perfect knowledge of obedience; writing and every kind of female embellishment are strictly prohibited. Nor is there any danger of the good woman's exceeding her commission, for to read her Bible, and make a shirt, is every degree of learning in which she is a proficient: but to shew how much she regrets this deficiency, and how sensible she is of those advantages she is not happy enough to possess, the first evening after my arrival, the worthy soul intreated my friendship for her pretty charge, and lamented her inability to
disappoint

disappoint the mercenary designs of her guardian, who, she said, she doubted not, was determined to keep her in ignorance, in order to make a property of her fortune.

If the amiable appearance of this lovely girl had not prejudiced me in her favour, this account would have been sufficient to have engaged my friendship: how sincerely do I sympathize with those unfortunates who fall into the hands of such unworthy guardians! they ever had my pity even when I thought myself peculiatly favoured in being exempt from such a fate; but, since becoming of that unhappy number, I still more forcibly feel for their misfortunes.

Think, my dear *Laura*, of an heiress to thirty thousand pounds being immured
in

in an obscure farm-house, destitute of all those advantages to which her birth and fortune entitle her, and ignorant even of the use of money.

Take her picture just as she appeared to me the evening of my arrival, or rather picture to yourself a form such as I am going to describe, but which must fall far short of nature; for it is the pencil, not the pen, which could convey to you a just idea of the dazzling lustre of a complexion which even might vie with yours, and that (partiality apart) is outvied by none.

She is about fifteen, tall of her age, and her person the just medium, between *embonpoint* and leanness; but, had she ceased growing, would, I believe, be most inclinable to the former; her shape

is

is symmetry itself, and her fine white arms seem rounded by the graces: as to her face, I am unable to describe it; there is in it a mixture of simplicity and archness that renders her quite attractive, and her fine dark eyes, enlivened by the lilies and roses of her cheeks, seem to bespeak a mind in which nature has not been niggardly of its gifts, though the hand of art has been wanting to bring them to perfection. Some of her auburn hair hangs in natural ringlets on her neck, the rest shades a forehead white as the polished marble: no borrowed charms aid her native beauties, the art of heightening them by dress is a science with which she is at present totally unacquainted, and one of which I hope she will long remain in ignorance, as the cultivation of the mind is most deserving her pursuit; plain white

frocks (though in growth almost a woman), and caps made after the manner of the peasants, edged with inferior lace, and bound round her head with pale azure ribbon, is all the ornaments she boasts; but in this unstudied dress she looks inimitably pleasing: all the reformation I would wish to make in her external appearance is the addition of a handkerchief, which as yet she has never discovered to be essential, to defend her snowy bosom from the sun and cold, is all the ideas she has annexed with covering it; and, when she finds no inconveniency from either, wanders about the fields and garden without the slightest veil to shroud her beauties, from the rustic gaze of the surrounding boors; she puts me in mind of that allusion to the innocence of our first parents,

parents, "they were naked, and were not ashamed."

But with all this simplicity, she has a natural desire of information that will greatly lessen the difficulty of instructing her. *Mrs. Groveby* assures me, she has a capacity beyond her years, and often makes her ashamed of herself by asking questions she is not qualified to answer. "My husband would have learnt her to write (says the good woman to me one day, when I was lamenting the ignorance in which she had been reared); but the Doctor laid such strict commands on us never to let her know the use of her pen, or teach her any thing but reading, plain-work, and her sampler, that we dare not disobey him, for fear of being turned out of the bargain; for the farm, *Madam*, is his, and he, besides pays us very nobly

nobly for keeping Miss; she has now been with us nine years, but the last time he was here, he talked of taking her away; saying, that as she was now grown a great girl, he must provide her a husband, or she would perhaps chuse one for herself that would not answer his expectations. I am quite unhappy for the poor thing (continued she), for I am sure when she comes into the world, and sees other young ladies so much more learned than herself, she will be quite ashamed."

"I hope we shall not yet lose her," replied I; "and it shall be my task to afford her all the improvement I am able." Mrs. Groveby sincerely expressed her thanks, and from that hour I received her as my pupil; and find such docility and quickness in her disposition, that I doubt
not

not but she will do me credit, and between us, we shall be able to convince *Doctor Lovegold*, that the wish of acquiring knowledge is not to be restrained by prohibition, more than that of pleasure by confinement.

I shewed her my works and my drawings (for I have brought implements for the latter, and also my guitar), and told her such were the proper amusements of a young lady of family; that she had hitherto been deprived of all the advantages to which her birth and fortune entitled her; but that, now chance had presented her with an opportunity, she had only to express her wishes of improving it; and my leisure hours should be employed in introducing her to a knowledge of all those accomplishments which I was in any degree mistress of myself.

The sweet girl appeared overjoyed at the proposal; she flung her fine white arms about my neck; said, she should ever love me as a sister, for the kind interest I took in her improvement; and made it her first request, that I would learn her to write.

“ I would have given the world, Madam,” said she, with the most engaging *naivete*, “ to have been able to have read your letter; and had I not been unwilling to draw my guardian’s displeasure on *Mr. Groveby*, would have teased him to death, if he would not have instructed me; but I would not for the *Indies* be the cause of making others unhappy to promote my own satisfaction, and therefore contented myself with hearing him read it, and I afterwards counted every hour till your arrival;

arrival; for, indeed, I have often wished for a companion, and though much older than myself, I thought you would perhaps condescend to notice me."

"The wishes of your heart on that subject, my dear *Clara*, are fully accomplished; and may every wish your innocence dictates be equally propitious! for my part, I think it fortunate that chance has introduced us to each other: your society will enliven the dull scene of my retirement, and mine to you will, (I am sanguine enough to hope) be productive of those advantages from which you have hitherto been precluded. Come, if you please, you shall now enter on the first rudiments of writing; I long to disappoint the cruel designs of your guardian; and to rescue you from that ignorance in which he has caused you to be nurtured,

F 2

tured, 'tis a task I shall attempt with the truest pleasure; believe me, my dear girl, I would not for the world be an encourager of disobedience: but, in this case, I look upon disobedience as a merit; besides, there is no occasion to make him acquainted with your acquirements, so he believes you ignorant its sufficient, and these honest people may still retain his favour."

She seemed delighted with my attentions, and has ever since attached herself closely to the pursuit of her pen; but which I can plainly see will soon be rivalled by her pencil, for I never knew a more susceptible genius for drawing, or one that appeared to admit of such a rapid cultivation.

By six in the morning, she is tapping at my door. Yesterday, before that time,

while

while I was indulging myself in a more peaceful slumber than I have enjoyed since I came hither, I was awakened by her soft woodbind notes, which she was endeavouring to bring to a tune she had heard me sing the preceding evening.

Presently she ceased, and coming as usual to my chamber, "My dear *Miss Chetwyn*, do pray forgive me for disturbing you so soon, but indeed I could not rest till I had told you my dream; I thought I could play divinely on your guitar, and the tune I thought I had been playing run so strongly in my head, that I could not help singing it when I awoke; I do think I should soon learn, if you would condescend to take the trouble of giving me a few lessons."

"I don't doubt it, my love; but we must not burthen your memory too much

at once : by aiming at every thing, you will become a proficient in none : after a few weeks have been employed in attaining the more necessary accomplishment, I shall with pleasure comply with your request."

" You are very good ; I hope to goodness my uncle will not send for me home so long as you are here : I used to wish he would take me away before your arrival, but now I should dread nothing so much ; I could stay here for ever, if you was with me."

Thus does she express her satisfaction at my little assiduities to improve her ; and mine, I assure you, are no less sincere in being permitted an instrument of her happiness ; for I know not any
amusements

amusements productive of such heart-felt pleasure as those of

Teaching ignorance to see,
And grief to smile.

After passing the greater part of the day in clearing her wild ideas how to shoot, we ramble through the groves, watch the declining rays of Phœbus, and sometimes return not to the farm till we have seen the shepherd pen his fold, and all the feathered tribe at rest.

You know I was ever partial to moon-light scenes, and many a time would willingly have given up a crowded night at *Ranelagh*, for the simple satisfaction of a country ramble, illumined by the pale beams of *Luna*; but custom forbade such rustic ideas from shewing them-

selfes in my conduct; fashion silenced inclinations that must at once have pronounced me a rebel to the town, and so far overcame my native sentiments, that it was not till I had been some days here, that I became fully sensible of the luxury of such enjoyments.

Last night we walked further than usual, and, charmed by a chorus of nightingales serenading us from the hedges, forgot how many weary steps we had to measure back.

Alarmed at our stay, and suggesting a thousand disagreeable causes, the good man and his wife sat out to meet us: we beheld them at a distance, and then recollected how much we had infringed upon their hours of rest; we apologized as truants should, and promised regularity

city in future ; for late hours, however employed, is not consistent with prudence either in town or country, and the salubrity of early ones too evident to be disputed ; to go to bed with the lamb, and rise with the lark, is the maxim of these good people, and the good effect of such regularity is visible on their features ; they fully verify the assertion of *Old Robbin* in his Almanack,

“ Thus early to bed, and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

Their constitutions are unimpaired, their circumstances easy, and their wisdom is conspicuous in their adherence to such a prudent plan.

We all walked home together ; and after partaking of an apple-tart, and a nice bowl of cream, separated for the night.

I fancy my little companion is not so musically inclined this morning; for I have wrote thus far without any interruption, and it is now near eight o'clock. Here she comes; what would she not give to know what I have written?

"How happy are you, *Miss Chetwyn*, in being able to express your feelings upon paper, and more so in a friend to read them. I have no friend to whom I can communicate mine, and even when able to write, I shall have no one with whom I can correspond: how charming it must be to tell all one's little griefs and pleasures to those whom we can trust! Do you tell the lady whom you write to, what a teasing inquisitive girl you have met with here? I am afraid you think so at least, for I know I am very troublesome."

5.

"That

"That, my love, is mentioned in the subject of my pleasures; I can think nothing troublesome that is not meant so; the desire of information is laudable, when it leads to the pursuit of useful knowledge: your name is, indeed, mentioned frequently in this letter, but in terms no ways disadvantageous."

"You do me honor in making me your subject at all," said she; and away she tripped, leaving me to finish my letter.

I cannot conclude it without telling my dearest *Laura*, that the sight of her would be perfectly pleasing to me, whether transported in a cloud, wafted in an evening breeze, or travelling in an humble car drawn by humble horses: for my part, divested of all ambitious

notions, I should prefer the latter mode of journeying, as deeming it the safest, and that, let me tell you, is no unworthy consideration; for to take care of ourselves is an essential duty; I would, therefore, recommend it to you, my dear, to make choice of the latter, whenever the inhabitants of *Broom Hill* are honoured with your presence. Should you attempt to appear before us in Balloonian splendour, the fate of *Semele* might attend us, and our weak intellects be too overpowered to give you that reception such a hazardous expedition merits: but a truce to jesting; and believe I was never more serious than in subscribing myself

Your unalterable friend,

HARRIOT PELHAM.

L E T.

L E T T E R V.

The Honourable CHARLES LUTTRELL
to SIR HUGH BLANDON.

Evergreen Hall.

DEAR HUGH,

AFTER a tedious peregrination of eight days, attended with half as many accidents, to wit, the loss of a horse, the sudden illness of *Bernard* (whom I was obliged to leave on the road), loss of time, and, to compleat the catalogue of *et ceteras*, the loss of my heart, behold me at length arrived at

FIG. THE DUPED GUARDIAN.

the antediluvian seat of my worthy ancestors, and received by the good old spinster *Mrs. Evergreen* with all those demonstrations of joy which may naturally be imagined after an absence of almost five years.

The bells rang, the fatted calf yielded up its life, in short, nothing has been wanting to testify the general satisfaction; for the son of her beloved *Emilia*, though in some respect he has shewn himself a prodigal one, appears still dear to her doating heart as ever, and the joy she experiences at again beholding her ungracious nephew seems to have obliterated the remembrance all his former follies; for travelling must at best be styled a folly by those that are possessed with the *amor patriæ*, and are strictly

strictly persuaded that nothing amiable exists out of their native clime.

Of my sisters I may truly say, as my good aunt condescends to say of me, they are marvellously improved; for, partiality apart, I never beheld two more lovely females (observe, I mention the plural number, for one I have certainly seen who, in my eyes, stands unrivalled); they were both fine girls before I went abroad, but are now full-blown beauties; and the becoming simplicity of their dress renders their persons still more attractive. On my arrival here, I found with them the amiable widow of *Ned Ashburton*, the youngest sister of *Lord Rosemount*, whose eulogiums you must before have heard, therefore it will be needless to enumerate the fascinating graces both of her mind and person. A
man

man can be killed but once, or my heart would certainly have fallen a sacrifice to such an assemblage of beauty shrouded in bombazeen, which helped still more to render it conspicuous; for *Thompson* and I are well agreed in thinking that

“Loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament

But is when unadorned—adorned the most.”

A woman laboriously decorated is, in my opinion, as displeasing as a studied speech, and with me both ever fail of their designed effect. I would have every thing accidental, even my pleasures; for those we long anticipate lose half their satisfaction: an attempt to please where nature only predominates much oftner succeeds than when the whole paraphernalia of art is called in to assist the endeavour. I have seen the most agreeable females,
among

among the circle of my acquaintance totally disgusting by their unlimited sacrifices to fashion, so disfigured by affectation, that when their dress and conversation (in their own weak ideas) was most calculated to inspire delight, they were in mine quite devoid of every claim to admiration, and would have appeared to more advantage in the most humble garb. It is in their hours of retirement, that agreeable women shew their real excellencies; for as every change of dress has its change of ornaments, so in general is it accompanied by a change of humour; and those most unassuming and amiable in dishabille, are haughty, conceited, and unentertaining in full dress. Had I the power of influencing the conduct of the sex, they should ever appear elegantly neat, but never fine; it is those only who have no interior charms,
should
who

who have occasion to exhibit their external ones in such a glaring light, and, if ever I marry, such I hope will be the sentiments of my wife.

Such I had the satisfaction to find are those of my sister and their amiable companions; for I never remember to have seen a group of lovelier objects, or less indebted to fashion for their attractions.

Eliza and *Harriot* seldom appear in any thing but a pearl-coloured poplin poleneze, fastened at the bosom and sides with bows of pale pink ribbon; their fine dark hair flows in natural ringlets on their snowy necks, and ornamented in front with only a wreath of glowing flowerets; the united productions of art, ingenuity, and fancy, looks more irresistibly attractive than if dressed by the hands

hands of the most fashionable milliner in the gay metropolis.

The amiable *Cecilia* is little more modern in her appearance ; nor does *Mrs. Ashburton* shew a greater desire of shining in borrowed charms : here simplicity seems to be that reigning motto, and as to prudery, levity, or affectation, they neither of them have the slightest symptoms ; though she has never been married herself, the sentiments of *Mrs. Evergreen* are not so contracted as to induce her to prejudice my sisters with the ridiculous opinions which generally tincture the character of an old maid : she has educated them on the most liberal plan, and their manners are as polished as their persons lovely ; they converse without reserve on any subject that is adapted to the understanding of their sex,

sex, and neither look upon ours as rapacious animals formed for their destruction, or as objects designed to engage their attentions unless dignified by merit; in a word, they have been matured as females should, in a just idea of their own worth, and taught the proper estimation of that they find in others.

So much for the partiality of a fond brother; and now let me enter on the subject nearest my heart.

As I was driving (or rather crawling), through A—— (for the loss of one of my horses had put some restraint on my velocity), a post-chaise passed my carriage, in which was such an angel of a girl as never before blest my eyes; roses and lilies are but a mean allusion to the matchless beauty of her complexion;

nor

nor could all the diamonds, of *Golconda* equal the sparkling lustre of her eyes, which were tempered with such a sweetness and serenity, as rendered her perfectly irresistible.

On the first glance all nature was up in arms ; ' I would have sacrificed all my hopes of happiness in this world, and the next, merely to have had the satisfaction of feasting my eyes one moment longer on her lovely face ; but the envious wheels transported her from my sight, and with her vanished my heart, and all that remained of my reasonable faculties.

So absorbed was I in the contemplation of her charms, that it was with difficulty I could keep the command of the reins ; but fortunately my beasts
were

were quite pacific, and I found myself at the inn, where I had proposed sleeping, without having awakened from my lethargy of thought.

The first object which struck my sight, on alighting from my phaeton, was the old gentleman I had seen in the carriage with my fair conqueror, walking about in the yard.

I immediately ordered my servant to make some indirect enquiries concerning him, and, before he left the inn, had the satisfaction to learn, that he was a doctor of physic at L——, and the young lady his niece ; but whether she resided with him, or not, could gain no information, as she had never been seen with him before.

To

To have discovered the place of his abode was at that time quite enough; on fate, and my own contrivance, I depended for the rest; but, determined to have another peep at her before she left the place, I fixed myself at a window, which was opposite the door she must pass through to get into the chaise, and in a few minutes had the pleasure to see her come out, for they staid only for a change of horses.

In the carriage I had only been attracted by a beautiful set of features, without knowing whether the body annexed might not be as deformed as the face was lovely; but on this second view, I had the pleasure to behold it united to a form in which nature had been equally profuse; yet, to my utter astonishment, the lovely creature appeared perfectly

perfectly unconscious of her charms, and instead of aspiring to womanhood, as is generally the case with most girls in their teens, was dressed in a muslin frock, her hair flowing in natural ringlets on her snowy neck, and her sweet face shaded only by a large straw bonnet, lined with blue, which she seemed to wear more for its conveniency than ornament. On so slight a view it is impossible to judge of her internal merit; but if the most amiable countenance in the world is not expressive of a mind as lovely, I will never in future attempt the honor of being reckoned a physiognomist; it, however, is evident (if we may form a judgement from appearances), that she has been educated in retirement, for not the least trait of a modern beauty is discoverable about her.

All

All I can with certainty affirm is, that I am most incontrovertibly in love, and though perfectly unacquainted with the age, quality, or fortune, of the object, should, at this instant, be happy to unite my hand with hers, for something tells me she is the fair-one designed by heaven to be the arbitress of my fate.

Mrs. Evergreen has been rallying me on the subject of my gravity, which she sagaciously attributes to my being afflicted with *la Maladie de Cupidon*. *Vrai ma bonne tante, mais vous ignore L'objet.*

It is not, as you imagine, some pretty Frenchwoman; neither is it (as you probably wish it to be) the sweet *Cecilia*: had I two hearts, your Favorite might command one, but all her charms, resplendent as they appear, are not suf-

ficiently powerful to make me forget, even for a single moment, my fair *incognita*. Was vanity among the number of my foibles, I should be inclined to take unto myself no small share of consequence, from the evident partiality with which this amiable girl seems to behold me; but it is a partiality which fills me with pain, instead of satisfaction, for my principles are not so libertine as to induce a wish of exciting a tender passion, where friendship is the best and only return I can make for such distinction.

From *Eliza*, I learn that an alliance with the *Rosemount* family has ever been ardently wished on the part of *Mrs. Evergreen*; and that, from her description alone, *Cecilia* had received the most favourable prepossessions of your friend, long before his arrival. Is it not a sign

that lovers are very scarce in this part of the world, that an amiable young lady should have so long fed her thoughts and wishes on expectancy alone? Would to heaven the portrait had been less pleasing, or, when seen, had been found to flatter! for the conqueror of such a heart is worthy a more grateful being than him, whose whole soul is absorbed in the contemplation of another.

As I am determined to attempt another fight of my fair unknown, it would be laying the greatest restraint upon my wishes, to make a very long visit here; besides, as circumstanced in regard to the partiality *Cecilia* honours me with, it would be ungenerous to feed her hopes. I shall therefore continue only another week at the *Hall*, and then bend my course to the country seat of

Sir Edward Waldron, which, if I am not mistaken, is within a few miles of the spot where *Dr. Lovegold* dwells. Should I be disappointed of finding my charmer with him, I shall at least acquire further information concerning her, and on that build my future hopes and expectations. Before my departure from this place, I shall anticipate a letter, a lecture I should rather have said; for I am sure you will inveigh most heartily against the folly of falling a martyr to a pretty face; no matter, I am prepared for it; and before I write again, hope to lay in a stock of arguments that will confute all the sagacious ones your worship can offer; if disposed to enlist yourself also among the fighting tribe, I don't know a spot you could come to with greater probability of finding a conqueror than *Evergreen Hall*; for a mind before enslaved
can

can alone hope to retain its freedom here: a little bit of an hibernianism, that; but all is excuseable, those in love are generally subject to inadvertencies, the truth of which may you soon learn from self-experience (for I hate to be singular in my folly), is the hearty wish of

CHARLES LUTTRELL.

L E T T E R VI.

SIR HUGH BLANDON to the Honourable
CHARLES LUTTRELL.

Pall Mall.

YOU might, indeed, with some propriety, expect a lecture. What a ridiculous piece of business! for shame,

G 3

man,

man, divest yourself of such folly ! After travelling through *France* and *Italy* and *Malgre*, all *les doux yeux*, of *La Belle Signoras*, and sprightly *Parisians*, to have brought home your heart invincible, for the simple purpose of laying it at the mercy of a baby in a white frock, is surely a degree of idiotism, that must greatly call in question your reasonable faculties.

In the name of gallantry, what satisfaction can you propose in this adventure ? I know your sentiments of honour are too well established for you to attempt the seduction of her innocence ; and, were you not so conscientious, there could be little satisfaction in obtaining a treasure, on the value of which the owner is too young to set a proper estimation. The pleasure of an intrigue consist

lifts in the spirit with which it is supported, and a consciousness that the preference is mutual; but what certainty can you have of that from a child who knows nothing of the world, and who must of course be so little acquainted with her own disposition, that was she to consent to become either your wife or mistress, her affections would remain uninterested, and her knowledge of the proper virtues of her sex be so little established, that the first pretty fellow who offered her *des bon-bons* would be thought quite as agreeable as yourself.

Banish her from your mind, and let her grow into consequence, before you attempt to expose your folly; when she is old enough to know her own mind, it will be sufficiently early to disclose the

state of yours ; for, according to the description you have given of her, a doll would at present be quite as acceptable as a lover, be assured that such a bait is unworthy the hook of a skilful angler ; resume your reason, and come again among us : if the charms of the sprightly widow, and amiable *Cecilia*, are insufficient to drive her from your heart, here are plenty of fine women, and highly accomplished, who cannot fail of effecting your cure ; conquests that are worthy of you ; not baby-faced puny girls blushing under a straw bonnet, but beauties of the first magnitude, whom it would be an honor to subdue. Give me a charming lively female who can love, yet have spirit enough to attempt to disguise her feelings, and who knows how to defend herself from our attacks, though her heart sides with the enemy ; to force
 such

such an one to own our power, and subdue her according to her own maxims, is a pursuit worthy an enterprising genius; but its mere milk and water business, to offer such a tribute as our heart at the shrine of a pretty idiot, whose ideas are entirely unexpanded; and, like an automaton, has learnt only to speak by rule, and say *No* or *Yes*, as other people direct. I was once near falling into such an error myself; but fortunately, while I was deliberating between prudence and inclination, the footman of my sweet enslaver happened to cast a favourable eye upon her fortune, and, being possessed of true Hibernian impudence, ventured to speak his wishes, and was accepted *sur le champ*: had not my good genius stepped in to my relief, what a ridiculous figure should I have cut with such a wife; for there is, no

doubt, the same folly as predominated then would have operated afterwards to her ruin and my disgrace; therefore it was much better of the two, that she should marry a valet than elope with one afterwards. This is but one among the many instances I have seen of young ladies brought up in ignorance of the world; for that charming simplicity, on which you expatiate so feelingly, generally terminates in their ruin: in my opinion, those who are intended to live in the world cannot be too early initiated into its manners and customs; for, by being made acquainted with its dangers, they must certainly be better able to guard against them, and by their conduct in it we may best discover their worth: the ear unaccustomed to flattery and admiration greedily devours it, and by unsuspecting credulity furnishes weapons

pons against itself. But I will no longer teaze you with observations on a subject, the truth of which I am sure your better reason must sufficiently point out.

I thank you for your kind wishes of my speedily becoming a fighting lover like yourself; and was I not in a fair way of accomplishing them without taking so long a journey, should have no objection to resigning my liberty to some one out of the amiable *coterie* at *Evergreen Hall*; but even then which must it be? a widow I am determined never to marry; the sweet *Cecilia* is fighting for you; *Miss Luttrell*, I am told, is seriously engaged to *Lord Rosemount*; and the gentle *Eliza* not less permanently attached to *Colonel Campden*; of course only your venerable aunt remains for me (for,

you know, I am too good a Christian to think of breaking a commandment): choice, therefore, would be out of the question; but sooner than resign my freedom to a pretty novice just out of her go-cart, I would fix upon the latter, as my honour I should think would be in much safer hands.

Now we are upon the subject of matrimony, or rather the prelude to that state, I must inform you, that I am but just returned from a congratulatory visit to *Sir David Oakham*. I suppose the papers have already informed you of his marriage; the very worst wife that fate ever in its wrath dealt a wretched mortal could not intimidate him from a second trial: but, to avoid the inconveniences attendant on the first, he has chosen a lady as replete with domestic virtues,

virtues, as was his former with fashionable foibles, and one too who has, like himself, experienced all the bitters of the wedded state.

About fourteen months ago, the indisposition of *Lady Oakham* (brought upon herself by a series of dissipation and irregular hours) drew them from the gay metropolis to the ancient seat of *Sir Edmund Houman*, which, from its contiguity to *Bristol*, was named by her physicians as an air most likely to be productive of salutary effects.

And salutary it proved; for it soon cured her ladyship of an existence, which, like *Alexander's*, was become burthen some (for want of new worlds to range in), and released *Sir David* from the worst of human ills.

The

The behaviour of the Baronet on the occasion was worthy a good Christian: he neither wearied heaven with his prayers to reanimate the lifeless corpse, nor wished to share with it the funeral honors; with due solemnity the remains of a wife, as frail as beautiful, were consigned to the family sepulchre, and as a tribute to those few virtues she possessed,

“ He dropt some nat’ral tears,
But wiped them soon.”

Lady Susan Ludlow, shining in all the pomp of widowhood, was at that time on a visit at *Sir Edmund’s*; and fate, bent on making whole those chains it had disjointed, inspired them with a mutual friendship; similarity of ideas concurring with a similarity of situation, insensibly attached them to each other’s converse; sympathy at first united them, and
a more

a more tender passion soon rendered them inseparable.

Five months rolled on without a syllable escaping that might tend to a disclosure of their mutual wishes; but a change of mourning on the part of her Ladyship produced more lively sentiments on that of her admirer. He ventured to aver, that though irresistible in bombazeen, grey tabby was infinitely more becoming; and added a wish to see even that substituted by less gloomy colours. In short, so powerful were his arguments, that at the expiration of the stated period for figuring *ex Deuil*, she consented to exchange the name of *Ludlow* for that of *Oakham*, and, if appearances may be credited, will do honor to his choice.

The

The relations of *Sir David* rejoice much in an union, which promises such a fund of permanent felicity; for his late helpmate not only injured his happiness, but also his fortune; and in consequence of her excesses he was much involved. But the œconomy and retired domestic turn of his present lady, added to the noble jointure she possesses, will make a speedy arrangement in his affairs, and secure him from future debts of honour. An acquaintance happening to meet him soon after his marriage, told him (after the usual congratulations) that he had been informed *Lady Oakbam* was one of the most unfashionable wives in *England*.

“The highest encomium, Sir,” replies the Baronet, “that the world could possibly bestow on her; for a modern wife

wife is the worst evil fate can deal an honest man."

He was not indebted to theory only for this remark ; experience had clearly proved it ; but, I believe, we may now felicitate him on possessing one truly amiable, from being destitute of every qualification which forms that character.

As the females say, I have no more news to write you ; no marriages, no deaths, nor elopements, to lengthen out my epistle. I believe, I mentioned to you some time since, that *Miss Pelham* had left her brother's house, and it is generally believed is gone abroad ; at least, that is the story given out by her family ; but I'm inclined to think differently of the matter ; for poor *Mrs. Hoyle* has never appeared in spirits since ;
and

and why should she afflict herself if that was all? The world (as on all subjects that appear mysterious) talks most loudly: some attribute her sudden absence to one cause, some another; but none agree that there is a lover in the case; with what justice I cannot pretend to affirm; shall therefore leave it to be determined by Time, that usual unraveller of all mysterious events.

It is time also to leave you to your repose; shall therefore, for the present, bid you adieu, and, in hopes of your next being filled with a more rational subject, than such a puerile passion,

Subscribe myself,

yours,

HUGH BLANDON.

L E T.

L E T T E R VII.

MISS PELHAM TO LADY LAURA
ANTRIM.

Broom Hill.

I AM quite out of spirits : my *Laura*, the sweet girl, whose innocent converse helped to enliven the hours of my retirement, is snatched from me, just as her young ideas began to expand themselves into judgement, just as I had formed the most flattering hopes of seeing her (before uncultivated) mind fraught with every good impression, embellished with every necessary and elegant acquirement.

Though

Though scarcely three months since I took upon myself the care of her instruction, already would her fertile genius animate her to the most incredible attempts; nothing appeared arduous, so emulous was she of improvement; few have a better idea of writing, who have long applied themselves to the attainment of it; and as to drawing, her ready fingers would trace out the surrounding landscapes with a correctness not to be imagined; and when she could not by all the dint of assiduity accomplish what she wished, would so pathetically lament the ignorance in which she had been brought up, that it would have affected you to hear her.

What a pity, that talents so improvable should be left to rust in obscurity, when a few of those useless hundreds
 she

she possesses, if properly applied, would have rendered her as accomplished as she now is lovely! but the man who could deprive her of those advantages of education, to which she is by birth entitled, surely means to deprive her of her fortune also; and the poor child is so entirely in his power, that she has no method of asserting her claims to either.

When she received the summons for her departure from *Broom Hill* (for Doctor *Lovegold* wrote to farmer *Groveby*, previous to his fetching her), the reluctance she felt to obey it can only be imagined from the effect it produced.

I was netting in the arbour, living over in imagination all those happy hours I had passed in the society of my *Laura*, and thanking heaven for compensating,

penfating, in fome degree, for the lofs of it, by indulging me with that of my amiable little pupil; when fhe came running to me fuffufed in tears, and a letter open in her hand, from which it was plain to fee fhe derived her fource of grief.

“ Oh ! *Miss Chetwyn* (the only name I am known by here), I am going to leave you; this nafty letter has almoft broke my heart; and, what is worfe, I am not only going to leave thofe I love; but I am to live with ftrangers, for my uncle fays he has provided me a better guardian.

What can have induced him to do fo? I am fure I have always loved him dearly, and had he but fent me to fchool, or placed me with fome lady who would in-
 ftruct

struct me as you do, I should have loved him still more : he surely has by some means found out that I am learning to write, and, to punish me for disobeying his commands, is determined to send me from him. Well, if he has, and will forgive me, and not send me among strangers, I will promise never to touch a pen again without he gives me leave."

Here a fresh flood of tears prevented her from proceeding ; and, begging her to be comforted, I took from her the letter, and ran over its contents.

There was nothing conclusive to be drawn from it, only that he meant to take her away ; for in speaking of having another guardian for her, he adds nothing explicit of his meaning, but from what *Mrs. Groveby* had before hinted

ed of a former conversation between them, I immediately suggested it must be a husband he alluded to; but not a word of my suspicions did I mention to *Clara*, for her ideas of that character were so vague and childish, that I should have involved her in a labyrinth of perplexing reflections, and myself into one of interrogations; I should have been puzzled to answer, unless her mind had before been previously prepared for the subject.

I told her, I doubted not, but if her uncle meant to relinquish the protection of her, he would place her in the care of some one equally deserving of the trust, and whose notions of female embellishments might be on a more liberal plan, of course she would be a gainer by the exchange; I begged her, there-
 5 fore,

fore, not to grieve (though my tears at the same time fall in concert with her own), and said, if it would be any satisfaction to her, I would write often to acquaint her of my welfare, and should have double pleasure in the correspondence, as it would help to improve her literary talents.

“Oh! my dear tutoress, how happy would that make me! but you forget that my uncle will not let me write; he says its the most dangerous thing that can be taught a woman; but why, I cannot imagine. I could almost be willing to have another guardian, if I thought he would not deny me the happiness of writing to you. I could then tell you all I thought, and all I wished; but I can tell you that now, for I am sure I shall always be wishing either to see or hear from you.”

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H

What

What amiable simplicity ! how lamentable that such innocence should be intrusted to the protection of one so ill-deserving of the precious charge ; for, if *Dr. Lovegold* meant to act by her with that integrity due to every orphan, would he thus obscurely bring her up ? Surely no ; influenced by some sinister view, he flatters himself, that, by keeping her in ignorance, he shall secure himself from detection ; but I will hope that some good angel will further the work I have begun ; and by still more illumining her understanding, render his mercenary designs abortive.

A few days after the receipt of her guardian's letter, while the sweet girl was sitting by me, assiduously aiming to copy a little drawing she had found among my papers, I took up *Thompson's Seasons*, and
read

read aloud to her the affecting tale of the *Lovely Gleaner*.

The pencil dropt instantly from her fingers, and every attentive faculty was engaged; by turns the tear of sympathetic sensibility, and the smiles of lively joy, adorned her expressive face, and spoke more forcibly than words the feelings of a heart alive to every generous sentiment. At length rising from her seat, and throwing her arms about my neck,

“Oh! my dearest Madam,” said she; “how shall I ever bear to leave you! the poor *Lavinia* could not love the generous *Palemon* more than I do you: through his kindness she became rich; and through yours, was I so happy as to stay with you, I think I should become wise, for to be like you would be my constant study.

study. How I love to hear you read! But there is another story, somewhere in the same book, about a lady that was killed with lightning: I was looking at it yesterday, and was so affected, I knew not what to do; but, had you read it as you did this, I should have cried, and that would have eased my heart."

"Your amiable sensibility delights me, my love; for the heart that is unsusceptible of pity is not often the abode of virtue: the story you allude to, is indeed, affecting, it is ever shocking to be deprived of those we love; but when the death of a friend is attended with such melancholy circumstances as that of *Amelia*, it renders the stroke still more poignant."

"Poor *Celadon*!" sighed she; "he could surely never be happy after that event."

event. I think I should have wished for death also had I been him, that I might have met her again in heaven : when he did (for I suppose it is many years ago), I wonder whether they knew each other ; I am sure if such a happiness as that of knowing our friends in another world is permitted us, though my guardian takes me from you now, I will rejoin you then, and never part from you any more."

"Your affection gives me inexpressible satisfaction, my dear ; and I sincerely hope we shall in this world meet again, though separated for the present ; but as to the hereafter, its mysteries are infinitely beyond the weakness of our comprehension. I hope when you leave this place, you will meet with some one as much interested in your happiness and improvement as myself, and then you

will have no reason to regret the loss of my society; but be not too sanguine in your ideas of friendship; many profess it, who in reality are unsusceptible of its feelings; and too often, do inexperienced hearts become a prey to such impositions: a little more acquaintance with the world will, I hope, serve to point out to you the difference; in the mean time be upon your guard, for an ill-founded attachment, either to our own sex or the other, is often the basis of eternal misery. If you do attach yourself to any one, let her be your superior in age and experience, that she may be able to correct the errors of your youth."

"O dear!" (interrupted she); "but if I should meet with another young lady as amiable as you, even though she should not happen to be older than myself, how
can

can I help loving her? can we do as we please in that respect? I don't believe I could help being fond of you, if I was to try ever so. How am I to judge who is worthy of being beloved, but by the affection they shew me, and the good nature they appear to possess? But I will always keep you in my imagination, and if any one I wish to love does not, in every respect, resemble my dear *Miss Chetwyn*, I will strive to drive them from my thoughts; won't that be the best method in the world?"

"Engaging little flatterer! what unanswerable arguments do you oppose to my restrictions! goodness is certainly attractive, and deserving of affection at every age. All I can add is, that you will ever have my prayers, that heaven may teach you to discern sterling merit

from that superficial dross, which too often dazzles our eyes, and misleads our hearts."

Here we were interrupted by the arrival of *Mrs. Groveby*, who said, she had seen the carriage of Doctor *Lovegold* coming up the road as she was feeding her turkies in the paddock, and sensibly begged our pretty *Clara* would express no repugnance to going with him, as that would, probably, excite his displeasure, and prompt him to think she was dissatisfied with his conduct.

She promised to be ruled by our advice, and wiping away the falling tear, prepared to meet him with as much composure as she could assume.

Presently the chaise stopt, and out hobbled the Doctor. *Mrs. Groveby*, and
Clara,

Clara, were at the door to welcome him; as to me, I kept my station at the window, from whence I could observe their meeting, and hear what passed.

"Well, my pretty *Clary*," giving her a hearty smack, "I am come to fetch you; what think'st of a husband, girl? I have got one in my eye I assure you, and a lord too; won't that be better than feeding of poultry? None of your coxcomical gentlemen neither; but one who will love you better for being brought up in this prudent manner. Hey-day! who have we here? (directing his eyes towards the window); that fine lady, I hope, has not been tutoring you, *Clary*? where did you pick her up, Dame *Groveby*? had I known you had such a visitor, I should have fetched my girl sooner."

Poor *Clara* looked frightened to death; while the good woman replied, "it was a young lady, who came to reside in the country a few months for the benefit of her health;" and by that time they reached the *Hall*.

The old gentleman looked at me with *les grands yeux*; and throwing himself into an arm-chair, began to be very profuse of his interrogatories, which not being willing to interrupt, I immediately withdrew; and, soon after, the sweet girl came weeping to my room.

"I am going, my dear *Miss Chetwyn*," said she, sobbing piteously; "my uncle will not let me stay another night. He seems quite angry to find such an amiable addition to the family: he says, my lord somebody (I don't know who, but

He is to be my husband) won't like me, if I have any fine lady's airs; that I must have no wishes, but to please him, and rejoices that I have been brought up in the country, as he says that very circumstance will make my fortune; for the gentleman (my Lord I mean) would not, for the world, have a wife that has had a modern education; and says, that the innocence of a young girl, who can neither read nor write, is more pleasing to him than all the learning in the world; for women that know too much are ever studying some mischief to deceive their husbands, and their guardians. He says too, that when I am married, I shall have a carriage and servants; but I must never want to go out, unless my lord is with me; for the world abounds with young men, who are always inventing some scheme for

the destruction of the innocent; and even to look at, or speak to them, would set his heart against me. Did you ever hear any thing like it? I am sure I wish he would not let me be married at all; I had much rather stay all my life at farmer *Groveby's*; for if I do any thing that don't please him, perhaps I may be shut up in some old castle, as the poor queen of *Denmark* was. I have heard a great many people say, she did nothing but speak kindly to some agreeable gentlemen; and how is it possible to be cross with those who are not cross to us?"

She might have talked for ever without interruption; for I was so distressed at the idea of such innocence and beauty being sacrificed to the mercenary views of an avaricious guardian, that I would have given the world to have been of a
sex

sex that might attempt her rescue from such unworthy hands; but I was permitted only to express my sensations by my tears, for before I could assume sufficient composure to answer her, she was informed her cloaths were packed, and she must instantly set off.

We embraced in silent eloquence; but before the dear girl loosed me from her arms, she said softly (as if afraid of being overheard, though none were near us), I will write, *Miss Cbetwyn*, if possibly I can; I know you will be glad to hear from your poor *Clara*, and when I am married, we may, perhaps, see each other; for if it is so very dangerous to speak to men, surely, my lord cannot be angry at my loving you, and if he should, I cannot help it, for I must love you though they killed me."

She

She was again called, and after another affectionate embrace, I resigned her to *Mrs. Groveby*, who was waiting to attend her to the chaise, and the poor woman (though deficient of those finer feelings, which serve to enhance both our joys and griefs) seemed little less affected at the separation than ourselves.

I will acknowledge, my dear *Laura*, that since the departure of this lovely girl I have found my time pass very heavily, a proof how necessary is society to the happiness of our life. The snarling misanthropist may argue how he will; but the sweetest retirement which the hands of art and nature ever yet produced, must be irksome, unless it contains some fellow soul, to whom we can communicate the satisfactions it excites. It is true, the converse of my lit-

tle:

the pupil did not answer all the ends for which society is desirable, because her mind was less intelligent than those who have been bred in the world; but in the culture of it, I found more satisfaction than it is possible to express.

Mrs. Groveby is too much engaged in her domestic avocations, to pass much of her time with me, and was she not (though a well meaning woman), is no companion for your *Harriot*; I am therefore left wholly to myself, and my whole source of intellectual amusement, since the loss of my engaging pupil, will not always preserve me from *ennui*.

I wander up and down these fertile pastures as disconsolate as our first parent, before heaven bestowed on him a companion in his solitude; and one of my

my own sex, possessed of those happy dispositions which help to inspire mutual friendship, would be to me an acquisition quite as valuable as was that gift to him; for living with those whose manners and ideas form such a contrast to our own, is in many respects as dissatisfactory as being in a country with the language of which we are utterly unacquainted.

How goes the world? is *Harriot Pelham* quite forgotten? Methinks I should like to take a peep into a certain drawing-room, to see who fills the vacant seat of your absent friend, and more to peep into the mind of him who drove her from it. Must the stings of remorse never wound him? Think you, when his dejected *Caroline* mentions the poor fugitive, and with a sigh regrets her loss,
must

must not conscious guilt make him turn appalled, when he beholds the portrait of a tender father recommending to his tenderness and protection the helpless orphan (the family piece I allude to, finely executed by West, you know, hangs just opposite the place where he usually sits)? What a field for self-reproach must it not afford when he reflects, that, instead of protecting, he has sought to destroy; but minds like his are incapable of reflection, nor feel remorse till the accomplishment of their crimes brings penitence too late; if he repents, its because he has not filled the measure of his guilt, and grieves to think he has been but half a villain.

Where is that wonted candour which used to adorn her *Harriot*? asks the astonished *Laura* to hear me thus severely judge.

judge. Alas! my love, the intended injury rises so fresh to my imagination, that every indignant passion fills my heart! What have I not lost by the cruel plot he had so artfully formed against my honour! the society of the friends most dear to me, and the flattering hopes on which I had built my future happiness; nay, probably, the esteem of those whose good opinion I find myself most ambitious to preserve.

Heigh! ho! but I must try to dissipate this depression (which *maugré* all the efforts of my native cheerfulness, will hover round my heart), and assume a more placid air, lest the good people of the house should think me dissatisfied with their conduct, which, to do them strict justice, cannot be more attentive.

What

What on earth can have wrought this sudden change ! I did not find this weight upon my spirits a few days since ; it surely must originate from the loss of *Clara*. I believe I must take the advice of *Mrs. Groveby*, and cultivate an acquaintance with some of the neighbouring families : there are (as she tells me) some agreeable young ladies at the Parsonage, and they do not by their external appearance disgrace the encomium ; for I was last Sunday at church, and, as they sat in the adjoining seat, had opportunity to make my observations.

They have already made some advances towards an intimacy which I have hitherto declined ; but in future believe I shall be less reserved, for the preservation of our social qualities depends on sometimes exercising them. As I shall repose

no confidence in them, no danger can possibly result from a cultivation of their acquaintance, and it will at least serve to deversify the scene should no other advantages ensue.

I was very near forgetting to mention a particular circumstance, which happened yesterday; the postman, who calls here twice a week for letters, had a large packet in his hand, and among the rest I observed one addressed to the Honourable *Edwin Solmes*; it appeared to be written in female characters. I should have liked much to have known from whence it came; but I thought it would appear strangely inquisitive to ask the man, besides, perhaps, he might not know. I wonder whether *Miss Lascells* is any where in this part of the country, it might be from her; I think you said
in

in a former letter, that she appeared anxious to engage his attention; her endeavours may have been successful, and a correspondence commenced in consequence of a reciprocal attachment between them; if not from her, it certainly was from a lady. I confess, so prevalent is curiosity, I should like much to know; perhaps, my dear, you may hear if any engagements of a tender nature are on foot between the parties abovementioned, or in any other family; not that it is in the least interesting, only I should like to know; for if she is in this part of the world, you know it would be necessary I should avoid her, least she should make mention of having seen me, and by that means lay a foundation for the discovery of my retreat.

Write

Write to me soon, that's my dearest girl, and tell me all you can to amuse my solitary hours. I am impatient to learn that my sister has recovered her tranquillity, that every thing but the presence of your *Harriot* conspires to make her happy; in short, I wish to know a thousand things of which your pen can alone inform me. Write soon then, my *Laura*, if you would speak peace to the oppressed heart of

Your absent friend,

HARRIOT PELHAM.

LET.

L E T T E R V I I I .

LADY LAURA ANTRIM to Miss
PELHAM.

Saville Row.

A H! *Harriot! Harriot!* is it come to that? And will you condescend to own yourself so frail as to be actuated by curiosity? Humble girl! what astonishing humility do you assume? No, no, it cannot possibly be interesting to you with whom the agreeable *Edwin* holds a correspondent; yet you would like to know; yes, I do not doubt it: how inadvertently some people disclose their secrets?

secrets? You are *en penseroso* too, and can't tell why, unless it is because you have lost your pupil; but *Laura Antrim*, far more discerning than your ladyship, at once divines the cause. Why faith and troth (as my good *Martha* says), you have lost your heart, child, and that is by far the most affecting loss of the two, not but I sincerely sympathise with you on the loss of the former, as I think it is a misfortune which may not be so easily remedied as the latter; for one heart in exchange for another at any time makes up the vacancy; but a companion, such as the pretty *Clara*, may not so readily be attained.

Ha! ha! ha! do let me laugh at you; nay I must, whether you give me leave or not. What an idea! the flip-pant inelegant *Bob Lascells*, rival the
 6
 amiable

amiable accomplished *Harriot Pelham*! where was your vanity, when those humble fears escaped you? or, rather, where was your exalted ideas of *Edwin* flown, when you supposed him so indifferent a connoisseur in merit, as to prefer a mind as inferior to yours as dross to silver; a person, which even the beauty-giving taper (so advantageous as its allowed to be to women and to linen) cannot irradiate beyond the most inferior class of charmers; for what is a pretty face devoid of sensibility? a plain one illumined by expression and good sense has far more chance to gain esteem and admiration.

Was it in my nature to be cruel, I would punish you for attempting to conceal what you have so prettily blundered out; but at a distance, which would not

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I

admit

admit of an eclaircissement till another post. I cannot have the resolution to sport with your felicity ; therefore, my dear *Harriot*, rest easy on the subject of *Miss Lascells* ; she is here, and, what is still a more pleasing piece of intelligence, is just as far from having made the desired impression on the heart of your *Adonis*, as when she first began the attack ; the poor fellow, I believe, has lost his feelings, for nothing here seems to affect him ; the vacant stare and frequent sigh seems to speak him totally devoid of thought, or that his thoughts are at a distance, perhaps wandering from place to place unknowing where to fix. I should like to be their pilot ; but, as mum is the word, I must for the present restrain my good-natured propensions. Nevertheless, though not permitted to be his physician, I sometimes
take

take the liberty *de lui tater le pous*, and generally find it beat towards a certain fair recluse, who has lately shewn strong symptoms of the jaundice, but whose disorder will I flatter myself abate, when my prescriptions come to hand.

In the first place, she is desired to call vanity to her aid, and till a rival something more formidable appears upon the lists, believe that her image still maintains its place in the heart she wishes to reign. In the next, she may rest assured, that general opinion has no weight upon a candid mind; the mildewing breath of slander, though blown ever so strong against her fairest fame, affects not those who are as much acquainted with her worth as *Edwin Solmes* and *Laura Antrim*; and, in the last, she is desired to banish all uneasiness relative to a certain

correspondence. As *Miss Solmes* is on a visit somewhere in the country, and the letter alluded to is certainly from her ; my next may, perhaps, inform you where, but for the present let this restore your spirits.

I have the most diverting piece of news to acquaint you with : such a marriage on the tapis ! I am sure you would not guess the parties this twelvemonth : nay, how should you, since I, who am going to inform you of it, know but one of them myself more than from description, but that will serve to convince you of the absurdity of the alliance. Only suffer imagination to present to us the idea of an old, worn-out, emaciated figure of seventy, united to a blooming child hardly escaped from her nursery, and who, for the sake of being thought a woman, gladly

gladly resigns her leading strings for the chains of Hymen. Such I am informed is the intended of my ridiculous guardian. Does not sensibility shudder at such an union? How pitiable the poor young creature, whom simplicity, or probably the authority, of some avaricious parent precipitates into such an unnatural marriage! To be resigned to the cold earth, and literally worm-eaten, I think, would be of the two a fate more desirable than that of being worm-eaten living with a title annexed; but, jesting aside (or you will think this avowal more for the sake of the pun than the real sentiments of my heart), I seriously think, let me be in what sphere I would, the addresses of any amiable private character, who possessed just a sufficiency to live on, would be more flattering to my vanity, and deserve a greater share of my attention, than a

titled lover of *Lord Wormeaten's* description ; for one compliment paid to my understanding would be more agreeably received than millions paid to my person ; and what proof of being thought devoid of sensibility greater than that of harbouring a belief that wealth and magnificence would be accepted as an apology for youth and merit.

Of what disposition, what family, or what fortune, is her ladyship in expectancy I cannot tell ; but from what I can learn of his lordship, she is very young, very prudent, and quite a contrast in every respect to the present modern race of females, nay, quite a contrast to your *Laura* ; and for fear I should endeavour to inculcate more fashionable propensities on her inexperienced mind, it is a determined point that I should never see her ;

her; to which end, he has very genteelly desired me to accommodate myself with some other friend till the arrival of that period, when *Mr. Mansfield* is to abdicate his reign, and my ladyship take possession of the family Mansion.

All this I have very submissively condescended to; but assured him, in terms of the severest raillery, that I would be the first to congratulate *Lady Wormeaten* on her marriage, and do my endeavour to convince her of her superior happiness (as well as prudence) to most young women of the age, in being united to a man who must have outlived all relish for dissipation, and consequently would prove the most domestic agreeable helpmate she could possibly have selected; and that, should she happen to be unacquainted with proper rules for nursing

the gout, I would explore all the publications on the subject, that I might be able to inform her how to fix it to her own advantage, and, by a regular mode of practice, remove it from the extremities to the stomach, that she might have an opportunity of displaying her conjugal affection to her dying lord, and when that ceremony was h-a-p-p-i-l-y over, and the dignity of dowager added to her other honours, I would extend my good-nature still further in convincing her (of what experience I trusted would by that time have taught her), that a young husband was as necessary to obliterate the remembrance of an old one, as sweatmeats to children after medicine; for the better obtaining of which, a new edition of the whole art of coquetry (a book I had always by me) should be entirely at her service, or (as during the intervals

intervals of the gout, she might probably find sufficient leisure for reading, for want of better amusement) she should be welcome to the perusal of it beforehand, that, by previously accustoming herself to the study, the practice might become easy.

“You may spare your eloquence on the subject, Madam,” replied the old Grecian frowning, and biting his lips, “for I shall take care that no opportunity offers of your instructing my wife either in the theory or practice of those arts you so kindly recommend. *Lady Wormeaten* will associate with none of ye, for, if true, that one dissipated character will infect a multitude, it is impossible that one virtuous woman thrown among a multitude should escape the general contagion; she will, as you say, find sufficient

ficient amusement at home, and should any leisure hours occur, instead of the art of coquetry, I shall recommend to her perusal what (as a guardian) I would wish your ladyship to attend to, the whole duty of woman; a study far more beneficial than any you can recommend, till the practice of prudence has engaged more of your attention."

A capital stroke of retaliation that; was it not? but, however, quite insufficient to silence me on the subject; for at an age when wisdom is expected to accompany the hoary head, it is abominable to think of a man's rendering himself so ridiculous; besides, it will blast all the expectations of his amiable nephew, who was ever too great a favourite of mine, to think of his being disinherited without feeling myself inspired

spired with the warmest indignation. *Charles*, I hear, is returned from his travels, but has not yet made his appearance in town; how will he be chagrined to hear of his uncle's intended folly! I really feel for his disappointment. I have several times been tempted to ask *Sir Hugh Blandon* some questions concerning him (you know they were ever bosom friends); but I know not how it is, that man ever treats me with such distant respect, almost bordering on aversion, that I can never have courage to enter into conversation with him; nay, I have even heard that he professes to despise me, and, while all the world are pouring in their adoration, publicly depreciates my charms, and swears they are defaced by haughtiness and affectation; was ever any thing so mortifying? Is it necessary that to be deemed agree-

I-6

able,

able, one should always smile, and treat the male creation with a condescension that would render them presuming? For my part, I think, such behaviour would be far more censurable; yet I will own so much have I found myself hurt by these invectives, that I am sometimes prompted to throw a little more complacency into my manners when he is present; yet he still appears to preserve the same opinion, and never condescends to observe the alteration. Astonishing behaviour, is it not? Why does he speak of me at all? I think if he cannot pass any eulogiums on me, it is quite unnecessary to make me his subject. I declare I should take more pleasure in making this unaccountable mortal subscribe to the general opinion of my power, and then treat him with the disdain he merits, than any conquest I could make.

make. Oh it would be the sweetest piece of revenge in the world! I believe, in order to enable me to undertake it, I must study some of those arts in which I so considerately offered to instruct my intended guardianness, for as yet I have never began the practice of coquetry, greatly as I boasted of my knowledge in that science. Don't you think it would be a laudable undertaking? Do, *Harriot*, in your next give me your opinion, and tell me if you think he deserves a better fate.

I know it will give you pleasure to hear that *Mrs. Hoyle* begins to recover her tranquillity. A few days since, I passed the afternoon with her. *Henry* was absent (I suppose gone to amuse himself in the society of the vile *Elwood*, for, she said, he went the *Hampton* road).
While

While we were at tea, her dear *Harriot*, as usual, became the topic: "What could have induced you to leave her; where you had secluded yourself was still so mysterious, that she should never be happy till it was explained;" yet (continued she, dropping a tear upon her hand), "I think, my dear *Lady Laura*, could I be satisfied that my sister was happy, and had formed no improper alliance, I should cease to regret her absence, since it contributed to her felicity; but not to know what is become of her is so shocking to reflect on, so expressive of something wrong, that its impossible to be easy under it. If she is married, surely when she comes of age, we shall no longer remain in suspense, for her fortune will certainly be demanded. What are your real sentiments, do you think she is or not?"

A con-

A conscious blush, I believe, helped to shew me less ignorant of the matter than I professed to be; her penetrating eyes observed it.

“ Ah! my dearest friend, you know something of the poor fugitive! your looks shew you do: for heaven’s sake, in pity to the feelings of an affectionate sister, tell me only that she is well, that she has not disgraced herself; and I will desire to know no more till she thinks fit to make me a participater of her secret; that she is virtuous, though she may have been imprudent, I cannot doubt, or you would not hold a correspondence with her: do tell me that (said she again, with the most beseeching looks), and I shall esteem you, if possible, still more than I ever yet have done, and, if you request it, I will not even

even mention my satisfaction to *Mr. Hoyle*."

Who could resist such pleadings from one so sincerely interested in your happiness? Forgive me, *Harriot*, for I could not; but do not alarm yourself; I only mentioned in general terms, "that in a letter you had favoured me with, I had been informed that you was well, had formed no connections of the tender kind, or at present meant to do; that, from motives of prudence, you was not permitted to reveal you had torn yourself from her society, and meant for some time to continue in solitude; the truth of this I assured her she might rely on, as I was perfectly acquainted with your situation, though engaged not to reveal it; and that you regularly received the remittances arising from your little annuity

annuity through my hands, which, in the retired manner in which you lived at present, answered all your wants. More I begged she would not desire to know, but that I trusted would be sufficient to restore her serenity; the only addition I could make, as a further satisfaction to her, was, that I had strong reason to believe your retreat in a great measure originated from your wishes to avoid the persecutions of a disagreeable lover." She appeared perfectly satisfied with this, and begged me to intreat you would, through my means, command her purse whenever an addition to your little income became necessary, which she avers it is impossible you should subsist on, not having the least idea that you have taken up your residence in so distant a part of the world, where the provisions of life

are

are purchased for a sum so moderate as twenty pounds a year.

I think, my dear, I have nothing now left to inform you of, but that your pensioners are well; but all my attentions cannot entirely console them for your absence. The little artificial florist wishes for *Miss Pelham* hourly; her friendly counsels and advice, she says, would determine her how to act in the most important business of her life: her innocence and beauty have attracted the attention of a young nobleman, who has made her an honourable proffer of his hand and title; but, though she owns herself attracted by his merit, delicacy, and a natural diffidence of her own, has hitherto prompted her to refuse him, from a consciousness that her want of proper embellishments to adorn such a rank

rank in life will render her unhappy under it; she has ventured to hint to him her objections, at the same time acknowledging herself sensible of the honour and happiness such an union would confer on her, had she been formed by education for such an exalted state; and as there is no difficulties a lover will not attempt to surmount, he honours her the more for those delicate scruples; and, to obviate them, proposes that immediately after they have received the nuptial benediction, they should set out for the Continent, and there acquire all those accomplishments she thinks necessary before she is introduced to his family, and, in the mean time, will provide generously for her mother, or make her the companion of their tour, which ever pleases her best.

All

All this generosity to a little obscure girl of sixteen, who has hitherto endeavoured to support herself and ancient parent on the produce of her own hands, one would suppose sufficient to have set her reason straying; but no such thing, not an assuming air, not an ornament more than usual; she still works with her accustomed composure, and receives the little proofs of liberality I bestow on her with as much humility as before his lordship's offers; nor would on any consideration receive the most trifling presents from his hands, till she had consulted me on the subject, being, as she gratefully expressed herself, the only friend now she had lost *Miss Pelham*, by whose advice she could with safety and satisfaction regulate her conduct.

Your

You may think, my dear, I did not hesitate in persuading her to accept this noble offer, when I had fully assured myself that his lordship was really the character he professed to be ; and, as secret preparations are now making for their nuptials, my next, I suppose, will inform you that she is *Lady L*—— ; an event I am sure you will rejoice in, as I know you agree with me in thinking, that a mind so elevated cannot disgrace the most exalted sphere of life.

As my letter appears to be of a sufficient length, I shall add no more at present, but leave you to make your own comments upon the subject ; for as much may be said both for and against unequal marriages, I might probably enter into a labyrinth, from which I should not very easily extricate myself ; shall,
therefore,

therefore, bid my *Harriot* adieu, with the strongest assurances of that unalterable friendship, which neither time nor absence can diminish in the heart of

LAURA ARTRIM.

L E T T E R IX.

The Honourable CHARLES LUTTRELL
to SIR HUGH BLANDON.

Waldron Place.

S PARE thy admonitions, *Hugh*, the fate of *Charles Luttrell* is unalterably fixed, and *Clara Aubry* its sole arbitress. As soon as I arrived here, I made all possible enquiries concerning the family

mily of *Doctor Lovegold*, and learnt that he was uncle and guardian to my charmer, who I find is heiress to an immense fortune; which, if report speaks true, he means to appropriate to his own peculiar service, and dispose of his lovely ward to the first person who will disinterestedly take her off his hands.

This intelligence gained; I informed my friend *Waldron* of the situation of my heart, and craved his assistance in forming a plan for my introduction into the family.

After a dozen schemes proposed, and as many rejected, it was agreed that I should introduce myself as a patient; but as the Doctor is not a little ostentatious of his medical skill, much art was required in the process, and it was with
 7 much

much difficulty we could hit upon an expedient that would answer the end proposed, without alarming his suspicions.

When we had fixed on the character I was to assume, I put on a consumptive face, and repairing to an inn in the neighbourhood, ordered my servants to give out that I was a gentleman of affluent fortune, who was thought to be in the last stage of a decline, and as change of air was the only remedy from which there were any hopes of relief, had fixed upon R——, as the spot I judged most salutary.

The next morning I began my operations by taking a walk near the Doctor's grounds, and by a well-feigned fatigue, just as I passed the house, procured an invitation from the housekeeper to rest
 myself

myself on a garden-chair, while she very humanely ran to acquaint her master, that a sick gentleman had strolled that way, and she had prevailed on him to rest himself in the portico.

To those who are ever watching for a fee, nothing is so grateful as the sound of illness: the Doctor huddled off his night-cap, threw on his medical caxon, and was with me in an instant.

“ My dear Sir, I am sorry to find you in this languid state; you have over-fatigued yourself, I fear: can I assist you with my advice? my house is at your service, and every assistance you think necessary: no one has a greater feeling for the miseries of human life, or, though I say it, greater abilities to relieve them.”

"I do not doubt it, Sir; it was that information which led me this way, and to your skill, as a physician, am happy to find you unite the tenderness of a friend; but I could not reach any further, and, sinking under the fatigue of my walk, should have fainted, had not this feat presented itself. I am going, Doctor; nothing, I fear, can save me, for death makes hasty strides to seize his prey; a little longer, and I shall be at rest."

"Do not alarm yourself, Sir; not so bad as that I hope, though far gone, far gone, indeed! come, lean upon my arm; with God's assistance we may yet perform miracles. Run, *Betty*, and tell *Clara* to smooth the sofa, and get ready the drops, for a sick gentleman is coming."

"Lord,

“ Lord ! Sir, Miss will be frightened out of her wits ; you had better let me tell her to go up stairs ; I can assist you well enough ; for she is so timorous, she will only do more harm than good ; she had like to have fainted this morning only at seeing *Will* the gardener tumble from the ladder as he was gathering some grapes.”

“ Hold your nonsense, woman, she must be cured of these childish fears ; go, and do as I bid you.”

Honest *Betty* then hobbled in, and the sick gentleman, supported between the Doctor and his servants, was conducted to the parlour, where, in due form, he was laid upon the sofa, and the beautiful *Clara* commanded to bring the *sel poignant*, and apply it to his nose.

The sweet girl approached, trembling; while I (though hardly able to contain my transports at the sight of her) was constrained to continue the deception, and, affecting to be still worse, sunk back upon the pillow, and suffered them to apply whatever remedy they thought proper for my recovery.

“Poor gentleman!” said the innocent creature, “how pale he looks! do, dear Sir, tell me what I shall do to bring him to himself! I am afraid he will die! shall I rub his temples with some of the drops? When people faint, it sometimes does them good.” And she instantly poured some into her hand, and began to apply it with a tenderness that was quite enchanting.

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By

By degrees I thought proper to recover, but not till her lovely hands had tenderly chafed mine, and every effort had been used for my recovery; I then endeavoured to raise myself on the sofa, and tried to articulate my thanks for their attentions. The good young lady too came in for her share of acknowledgements; hoped I had not alarmed her by my fainting, and begged she would not trouble herself any further, as I found myself much amended, and would try to walk back to my inn, after I had been favoured with the Doctor's prescription; for I had the highest opinion of his skill, and should henceforth resign myself to his directions: this was accompanied with a fee, and the worthy Doctor, no doubt, congratulating himself on his good fortune, in having so accidentally stumbled on a

fat patient, immediately began to prescribe with a gravity and discernment that did honour to his judgement.

As I was supposed to be in more than a trotting consumption, the medicines usually prescribed for that disorder were prudently recommended, and the air of R——, as most conducive to his own interest, was pronounced the most salutary in the world for persons in a decline; I had therefore only to remain where I was, and be regular in the use of those powerful restoratives he had ordered me, and there was no doubt a few weeks would set me on my legs.

This matter adjusted, I prepared to take my leave, after plentifully feasting my eyes on the charms of the lovely *Clara*, which were still more heightened
by

by the emotions she discovered at my supposed sufferings.

“How happy” (said I, surveying my languid features in the glass, as I was buttoning my great coat) “are those who enjoy a good state of health. This young lady, Doctor, appears to be in plentiful possession of that desirable blessing; her blooming countenance renders the paleness of mine more conspicuous, and serves more to point out my danger: one would suppose she had never a day’s ill health in her life.”

“All a mistake, no such thing; the most puny chicken in the world, till a proper regimen, and the air I judged most adapted to her constitution, wrought in it a perfect change; and she is now as healthy a subject as any in *England*;

with God's assistance I hope to see you one day as healthy, if you abide by my directions. Eh! *Clary*, what think'st thee, child; your uncle is no bungler of a physician, is he? This gentleman may yet bless the day he came among us."

That I do already most sincerely (thought I, while the sweet girl replied),

"I hope he will, Sir; I am sure, I should be glad to see him better; for, indeed, he looks most shockingly."

"No great compliment to your person, whispered vanity, *n'importe*," replied I, "so I appear an interesting figure in her eyes, it is sufficient for the present. If she pities me in illness, she will love me in the bloom of health."

So

So much for my visit introductory; and now let me proceed to inform you what benefit has since accrued from it.

The next evening I called again, and was informed the Doctor was from home.

No matter, I am in no hurry, I can wait till he returns.

Mrs. Betty then conducted me to the parlour, where sat my angel busied at her work: the moment the door opened, she flew to smooth the sofa, and expressed her sorrow that her uncle was absent; then casting on me a look of the tenderest concern, begged I would rest myself till he came; for she was sure I must be very tired with walking so far in such a languid state.

I need not tell you that her eloquence prevailed. I placed myself on the sofa, and (for the pleasure of receiving it from her sweet hand) complained of being a little faintish, and said, a glass of water, with a few drops in it, I thought would do me good.

She instantly flew to get the water, and was going to add the drops; but fearing to make a mistake, as she did not seem to understand the labels, tasted each bottle as she reached it down. My fears for her safety at once obliterated all ideas of the sick part I was acting, and jumping from the sofa, I caught the third bottle from her hands just as she was about to raise it to her lips, and, telling her I was better, and could do without, begged she would not trouble herself to seek for them. Alarmed at
the

the suddenness of the action, and thinking my patience was exhausted, she shed a blush of the deepest dye, and, with a tear of sensibility trembling in her eye, replied,

“ Indeed, Sir, I think it no trouble, I shall find it in a minute; but I have heard there are so many poisonous drugs, that I was afraid to give it you without tasting, for fear I should make a mistake; and I am sure I should never forgive myself, if I was to do any thing to hurt you.”

Charming simplicity! how I could have thanked her for such attention to my safety.

“ Your disposition must be a very amiable one, Miss, if it prompts you to be more careful of another’s health than

your own; I am infinitely indebted to you for this attention, but I hope you will not make a practice of running such risks, as the consequences may be fatal to yourself. Your uncle should initiate you into the mysteries of his superscriptions, that in cases of necessity you may not be liable to errors."

"I will endeavour to learn the names of all of them before you come again, Sir; but I hope you will have no occasion for them then, as you seem rather better, I think, than you was yesterday; but my uncle says, people in a consumption are never two days alike, so I must not flatter myself too much."

"Would it really then give you pleasure to see me better, Miss? of what a feeling heart must you be possessed, if
it

it leads you thus to sympathize in the sufferings of a stranger! but it is not to the interest of a physician, you know, that his patients should get well too soon."

"So my uncle says, Sir; but I have so intreated him to make you well as fast as he can, that I hope he will give you something that will do you good, though it may not be so much to his advantage; for it is shocking to prolong people's misery for the sake of interest."

"And are you thus considerate for all the Doctor's patients, Miss? but time will blunt those tender feelings; you have not been long from school, I suppose?"

"No, indeed, Sir; I have never yet seen any one I felt half so sorry for as yourself."

yourself. I should pity any body that was in pain, if I thought them ever so disagreeable, but its more affecting when one don't."

"I am very happy to be among the number of those who do not appear disagreeable to you, Miss; but pallid faces must by this time have become familiar to you, for I suppose your uncle has as many patients at home as out."

"I believe so, but I have seen but very few, for I have not lived with him above a fortnight."

"And shall you continue with him, Miss? or, do you return to school?"

Her sweet face was instantly suffused with a blush of conscious injury, and
 respiring

respiring a deep sigh, she said, "she never was at school, her uncle thought a woman could not know too little, and told her, the gentleman she was to marry would like her the better for being ignorant; but, for all that, she could not be happy about it herself, and should not like him half so well, as if he had persuaded her uncle to let her learn what other young ladies did."

"Marry!" repeated I, thunderstruck; "you are not surely going to be married, Miss!"

"Yes, indeed, I am; is there any harm in it, then? I am sure I can't bear the thoughts of it, for I shall hate to live with a stranger; and my uncle says, I must live with my Lord when I am married to him."

Deluded

Deluded innocent ! “ No, my sweet girl, there is ~~no~~ harm in being married, if you love the man you intend to marry ; but, if you do not, it is the greatest crime in the world ; but who is this Lord you speak of ? ”

Before she could reply, the Doctor's chaise drove up to the door ; and, deeming it most politic not to appear too much in a state of convalescence, I affected to relapse into my former langour ; and, leaning back on the sofa, supported my character *a merveille*.

The moment the carriage stopt, the sweet girl ran to inform him the sick gentleman was come, and lamented her inability to afford him any relief, as she could not read the superscriptions : “ Do pray, Sir,” continued she, “ shew me how

to distinguish them when he is gone, that I may know better another time."

The old gentleman quickened his pace on learning I was there, and, coming up to me with the utmost solemnity, pronounced the state of my disorder by the information of my pulse; a sagacious shake of the head seemed to prognosticate, that without the utmost caution the case was desperate.

"The gentleman won't die, will he, Sir?" said his charming niece. "I am sure I thought he was a great deal better;" and she turned away her head to hide her concern.

"I hope not, *Clary*; but we must not be too sanguine; these night airs are no ways advantageous to invalids; if the gentleman

gentleman would permit me to visit him at his lodging, I should have more hopes, for in his present weak state he cannot be kept too quiet."

As that would by no means answer my purposes, I told him I was convinced, that, I could live no longer than while able to crawl into the air, therefore, while possible to walk as far as his house, I was persuaded his prescriptions would be more effectual than if confined to my apartment. I must, therefore, in opposition to his advice, persevere in my evening's walks, but in every other particular would submit to his opinion.

There was no opposing this argument : was a person in a raging fever to persuade themselves that a draught of cold water would be of service ; humanity
could

could not refuse it, however contrary to the received opinion of the faculty ; what, therefore, was to be done, but suffer me to take my own course ? all the difference was to myself, the Doctor still received his fee ; and, whether I followed his prescriptions or not, was likely to be enriched by my acquaintance.

Without daring to cast a look expressive of my feelings (and which probably, had I done so, might not have been understood by the object to whom their language was addressed), I again took my leave with many acknowledgments of his kindness, and sauntered back to my inn, meditating upon the subject of her marriage which she had so innocently informed me of.

So interested did I feel myself in learning further particulars, that it appeared
to

to me a century till the ensuing night ; and, not able to conquer my impatience, the next morning, as soon as I had breakfasted, my feet instinctively led me towards the spot which contained my happiness, and fortunately my lovely girl was again alone.

She appeared rejoiced to see me, but started at a weakness I assumed in ascending the steps, and hastily, taking a bottle out of her pocket, held it to my nose, saying, " She thought she would not be so much at loss when I came again, for on learning which was the *fel poignant*, she had put it in her pocket, that it might be in readiness.

Without seeming to be sensible of her attentions, I suffered myself to be led into the parlour ; and, as soon as my languid

languid limbs were reposed upon the sofa, feigned to sink into a gentle doze, that I might at ease discover what effect my presence had on her.

When she observed that my eyes were closed only by sleep (which, doubtless, she attributed to the fatigue of my walk), a visible satisfaction beamed on her lovely face, and, treading with fairy steps, fearful of awaking me, she walked to a seat opposite the sofa, and took up her work, every now and then looking towards me with the most inquisitive tenderness; at length, as if struck by a sudden thought, she hastily arose, and taking out her pocket-book, and a piece of paper, leant against the end of the sofa, and began with a pencil to sketch out something upon it.

I should

I should never have guessed the subject, had she not appeared to be foiled in the attempt, and by her innocent expressions of regret discovered to me what I was so anxious to learn.

“ Dear ! dear ! ” said she, “ how sorry I am that I can’t draw a little better : if *Miss Cbetwyn* had come sooner to *Broom Hill*, I should have been able by this time to have done it ; but I will try again ; he seems to be in a sweet sleep, and, if it was not for the fear of disturbing him, I would steal a nearer look ; but, perhaps, he won’t awake if I am careful ; ” and, advancing very softly, she lifted up the handkerchief I had thrown over my face, and, I suppose, was about to make a second attempt to take a likeness (but, as I dared not open my eyes, I could not see her), when a rap at the
door

door disturbed her from the essay, and hastily thrusting the paper into her bosom, she ran to her seat, and again resumed her work.

It did not, however, happen to be her uncle, and, determind to profit by his absence, I thought proper to awake at the noise, and, with a yawn of a comfortable length, asked, how long I had been asleep; at the same time begging pardon for sinking into a state of insensibility in her presence, a rudeness, for which nothing but my weakness could apologize.

“ You have not been dosing long,” said she; “ but I hope the little you have had will do you good. I wish the nasty door had not disturbed you so soon; for, when people are ill, I think they

they can only be easy while they are asleep. Try, Sir, if you cannot compose yourself again; if my presence prevents you, I will leave the room, and you can ring when you awake."

"Not for the Indies, my sweet girl! I could sleep much better if you was by; but your uncle has been here, has he not? I either dreamt it, or saw him writing a prescription on the side of the sofa."

"O dear! no, Sir," (her face beautifully vermillioned), "it was me I suppose; for I had a bit of paper in my hand as I stood where you speak of."

"You can write then, I suppose?"

"Very little, indeed. A sweet young lady who came to lodge at the farmhouse

house, where I was brought up, taught me, a little unknown to my uncle; but soon after she came, he fetched me away, and I shall never learn now, I suppose, as my Lord don't approve of it."

This was the very subject I wished to enter on; and, improving the opportunity, I asked her, if her marriage was really determined on, and how soon it was to take place.

To the first question she answered, that her uncle told her so; and to the next, that she could not tell how soon; but his Lordship had seen her three times, and seemed to be in a great hurry to take her away.

"I hope, however," continued she, with the most bewitching *naivete*, "I

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shall

shall not be married till you are better, for then there will be nobody to receive you when my uncle is from home; besides, I should lose the satisfaction of knowing you was well, if my Lord lives at a great distance."

"I hope not. But, my dear young lady, you speak of your approaching marriage in terms that shew your heart to be little interested in it. Do you prefer his Lordship to every other man, that you so readily acquiesce in your uncle's wishes, or is it his rank that dazzles you? A title does not always confer happiness."

"No, I do not like him half so well as other people. He looks so old, and so cross, that I am afraid to speak to him; and he speaks so ill-naturedly of every-body

every-body younger than himself, that, I dare say, he will never let me even see my dear *Miss Chetwyn* any more; for, when I am married, I am never to go out without him; and what signifies being a lady, if I am never to do as I please. If he was like you, I should never wish to go from him; for I think I could sit by you for ever, and not be tired, though you are not a lord; but to be shut up with him will make me quite unhappy. I wish he did not like me."

Was it possible to restrain my transports, after such a flattering confession?

I pressed her soft snowy hand to my bosom, and told her, that her good opinion would be more conducive to my recovery than all her uncle's prescriptions. "Since you wish me to live, my

dear *Clara*, I will try to get better ; but if you are determined to marry this Lord, whom your uncle has provided for you, it would only be escaping from one death to die another ; for I could never live to see you so unhappy."

" Do you think I should be so very unhappy too ? Then I am sure I must be so, for I believe all you say ; but what can I do to avoid marrying him ? I would do any thing in the world to save your life, though my uncle was ever so angry."

" Marry me, my angel, and I will shelter you from your uncle's fury, and render you as happy as love and tenderness can make you."

A sweet blush overspread her face; but it appeared to be the effects of joy, rather than confusion; for she replied instantly, with the most unaffected innocence,

“Aye, that I would, if it was possible, for I should love you as well as my dear *Miss Chetwyn*; but my uncle says, I can’t positively marry any one person living but my Lord; besides, it will be a long, long time before you are better, and by that time I shall, perhaps, be gone.”

“I flatter myself you will be happy to find that I am well now, my sweet girl, nor ever was ill; but the wish of obtaining a sight of you made me assume the appearance of sickness, that I might the

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easier

easier attain that happiness ; and I have momentarily wished to tell you so."

" O dear ! how happy I am ! then you won't die, though my uncle says you will, and you can marry me, instead of my Lord ! Who will, in future, believe what he says, when two such strange things are likely to happen ? But are you really well ? How can it be ? I am sure you looked shockingly just now."

I had no time to reply, the Doctor was at the door ; tenderly pressing her hand, I could only enjoin her to silence on what had passed ; and in a moment, resuming my character, became as compleat an invalid as before this confession.

The pleasurable emotions of her heart were visible on her features ; but fortunately

fortunately were observable only to myself; for her uncle was too much engaged, in enumerating the quantity of patients he had then under his care, and lamenting the fatigue which arose from being so eminent in his profession, to pay any attention to the joy which danced upon her face.

But though hers remained unnoticed, mine, at the innocent discovery of her attachment, had thrown my whole frame into such a tumultuous state, that though well, my agitation helped to speak the contrary; and after undergoing the usual examinations, he advised me to lose a little blood; for my fever was considerably augmented, and from the difficulty of respiration, appeared to be accompanied with some pleuritick symptoms.

It was with difficulty I restrained a smile, at the solemnity with which this was pronounced; but poor *Clara*, *malgré* all that had recently passed, believed my state to be literally such as her uncle had described it; and had he not fortunately been called out of the room, would inevitably have betrayed me.

I took the opportunity of his absence to assure her, that I was never better in my life, and did not mean to follow his prescription, and desired her on no account to mention any thing relative to my indisposition being a feigned one; for if her uncle suspected that it was so, he would certainly hasten her marriage; and all hopes of happiness would then be at an end.

“ But

“ But will you marry me yourself, and then it won't be in his power you know? I shall be so glad when to-morrow comes. You will then be here again, than't you, and we can talk more about it?”

I assured her I would, and, as soon as the Doctor returned, took my leave, and came home to consult you on the subject; for after all, *Hugh*, I am confoundedly at a loss how to act: that I love this sweet innocent beyond all human possessions is most certain; yet, under her present disadvantages, to marry her would, in the eyes of the world, favour more of interest than love, though, God's my witness, her fortune is no part of my inducement, splendid as it is. What a wretch this uncle of hers! Out of thirty thousand pounds, not to have had a heart
even

even to disburse sufficient to procure her those advantages of education to which she is entitled ! nay, she even appears not to be sensible that she has any fortune, and says, her uncle is continually extolling the generosity of my Lord in taking her without one.

Who my Lord is, God only knows, for I can learn from no one here, so he must pay his visits very privately ; but I am determined as privately to rob him of his fair prey, even though no other satisfaction was proposed than that of rescuing her from misery. But how, or where, I shall dispose of my sweet prize, is yet to determine on.

I cannot possibly take her to *Mrs. Evergreen's*, though I am sensible my sisters would be happy to receive her ;
for

for the good old Lady values herself so much upon her strict adherence to propriety, that harbouring of a run-away heiress would by no means suit the decorum of her family. I was thinking of taking her to *Lord Wormeaten's*, where, under the auspices of his amiable ward *Lady Laura Antrim*, she would be shielded from the shafts of calumny, and from her example gain some information of those little decorums that are peculiar to her sex, and never to be dispensed with in a virtuous woman. At present all her little improprieties render her more amiably interesting, because convinced that they result from the sincerity of her heart, and an uninformed mind; but not for the world would I take advantage of her innocence, to make a property either of her person or her fortune; with her ladyship, or some other worthy person of her own sex,

sex, she shall remain till time, and some little knowledge of the world, has convinced her that *Charles Luttrell* is deserving of her heart, and then should she think fit to reward his endeavours to serve her by such a precious gift, whether her guardian can be brought to consent or not, it shall be accepted with the warmest gratitude; but never will he take such an unmanly advantage of her uninformed mind, as to draw her into an alliance before time and experience has matured her judgement, and confirmed her in her choice.

At present I can fix on no settled plan; but after another interview, I shall, perhaps, have hit on one: in the mean time, if you have a moment's leisure write to me, and tell me how goes
on

on your *affair de coeur*. I don't know whether I am mistaken or not; but from the portrait you have drawn of the "woman to your mind," I should think the lady I have just been mentioning had sat to the painter; if so, you have got into a labyrinth, from which you will not easily extricate yourself, and spite of all your sagacity, when you have burnt your wings, will be constrained like the moth to surrender yourself to the blaze; and after all, what can you do better than strike your colours to a generous conqueror, for, if the eyes of partiality do not mislead me, *Hugh Blandon* is not devoid of pretensions even to such a heart as that of the fair lady in question, and once possessed of such a valuable deposit, there is no doubt but your bondage will be rendered easy.

But

But a truce to trifling ; more serious
business must now employ my mind !
So adieu till a future hour ; the pre-
sent ones are all engaged ; and, till ano-
ther opportunity, can only add, that I
am most heartily yours, though I might
truly subscribe myself, *sans coeur*,

Yours,

CHARLES LUTTRELL.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



